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California Desert Conservation Area

WILDERNESS INVENTORY

Final Descriptive Narratives

March 31, 1979

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FINAL
WILDERNESS INVENTORY

CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA

Prepared by

Bureau of Land Management
U. S. Department of the Interior

Ed Hastey
State Director
California State Office

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INTRODUCTION

This document, in combination with the accompanying map:

1. Describes the wilderness inventory process on Public Lands within the California Desert Conservation Area;
2. Identifies which of those Public Lands meet the size, roadless, and wilderness value criteria of the Wilderness Act of 1964, and which do not; and,
3. Lists CDCA Public Lands designated as Wilderness Study Areas by the State Director, California.

This document is divided into six parts. The first part describes the basis, the purpose, and the procedures followed during the wilderness inventory process, and also describes the process for appealing or protesting the decision of the State Director, California, on Wilderness Study Area designation. The second part contains the descriptive narratives for each of the numbered areas on the accompanying map. The third part lists the designated Wilderness Study Areas and Public Land acreages for each. The fourth part describes the intensive public involvement program, and provides answers to some common questions asked during the inventory. The fifth part tells what will happen to the CDCA Public Lands identified as Wilderness Study Areas during the wilderness study phase, and refers to the accompanying Workbook. The sixth part is a Glossary of Terms.

Questions or comments concerning this document, accompanying map, and the decisions herein, should be addressed to the BLM State Director, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825.

PART I: BASIS, PURPOSE, AND PROCEDURES

The Wilderness Review of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) is being carried out by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in response to two congressional mandates set forth in Public Law 94-579, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA):

1. Section 601 of the Act established the 25-million-acre California Desert Conservation Area, and directed BLM to prepare a comprehensive plan for the management, use, development, and protection of the Area's Public Lands by September 30, 1980.
2. Section 603 of that Act directed the inventory and review of those roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more of Public Lands administered by BLM which possessed the wilderness characteristics and values identified in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. (See pages vi and vii)

Public Lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management were not included in the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Act provided for the establishment of a National Wilderness Preservation System, and required that inventories of Federal lands within the National Forests, National Parks, and National Wildlife Refuges be conducted to determine which of these Federal lands would qualify for inclusion in the system. It was not until 1976, when FLPMA was enacted, that Public Lands administered by BLM required similar inventory and identification.

BLM's Wilderness Review Program in the CDCA is divided into the three separate phases that will be used for the wilderness review of all Public Lands:

1. INVENTORY -- Closes with this publication

   This inventory phase explicitly involves looking at the public lands in the CDCA to determine and locate the roadless areas containing 5,000 acres or more of contiguous lands which meet criteria in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

2. STUDY -- Begins 3/31/79; Closes 9/30/80

   The study phase involves the process of determining, through careful analysis, which Wilderness Study Areas, identified through inventory, will be recommended to the Secretary of the Interior as suitable or non-suitable for wilderness designation by Congress. These determinations will consider all values, resources, and uses of the public lands.

3. REPORTING -- Begins 10/1/80

   The reporting phase consists of actually forwarding, or reporting, the suitable and non-suitable recommendations through the Secretary of the Interior and the President to the Congress. The recommendations will be accompanied by mineral surveys, environmental statements, and other data required by law. Within two years after receipt of each Secretarial recommendation, the President must report his final recommendations to Congress. Only Congress may designate an area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation system.

Within the 25-million-acre California Desert Conservation Area are 12.5 million acres of public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management; 2.5 million acres of Federal lands under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service; and, 3 million acres of Federal lands under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense. The remaining CDCA lands are in private ownership, or under the jurisdiction of the State of

California. Only those Public Lands administered by BLM are considered in the wilderness inventory, study, and report process.

As a resource value, wilderness must be inventoried and identified in order that it be integrated and compared with other resources in development of the California Desert Plan. Because of the legal requirement for BLM to complete the comprehensive, long-range management plan for the Desert Conservation Area by September 30, 1980, the wilderness review timetable has been accelerated for Public Lands within the CDCA.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 requires that size, naturalness, and solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, be factors in the wilderness inventory of areas which have been determined to be "roadless".

In order to determine specific roadless areas containing at least 5,000 acres of contiguous Public Lands, existing roads, rights-of-way, and non-public ownerships conforming to the BLM road definition were used as area boundaries. Within these inventory areas there frequently are a number of "ways" and trails which do not qualify within that definition as roads, although they are used as routes of travel.

Within the perimeters of an area, roads may occur which pierce, but do not bisect, that area. In such cases, the boundaries of the actual portion of that area which was inventoried for wilderness characteristics were drawn around the non-bisecting road, or the manmade intrusion if such were the case, if a roadless area of 5,000 acres or more of contiguous Public Land remains.

Once the boundaries of a roadless area were determined, then the area was inventoried to determine the existence of the three basic wilderness criteria: size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunity for solitude or primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

As a result of this process, with its detailed public involvement, Wilderness Study Areas are hereby designated by the BLM State Director, California. They are listed on page 231 of this document, with appurtenant acreage figures for each designated area, and are shown on the accompanying map of the CDCA.

The California State Director's decision on Wilderness Study Area designations becomes final 30 days following publication of notice in the Federal Register, unless formally and publically amended and published in the Federal Register by the State Director, based upon new information received as a result of final publication. Any amendment by the State Director to the original decision will become final 30 days following the amendments publication in the Federal Register. This 30-day extension would apply only to the amendment.

Persons adversely affected by designation of a Wilderness Study Area shall have 30 days after publication of the State Director's decision in the Federal Register to file a written notice of protest, including a clear and concise statement of reasons. The notice should be addressed to, and filed with, the State Director, Bureau of Land Management, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825.

From the time the CDCA Wilderness Study Areas are designated until Congress has made a final determination, BLM has the responsibility for managing them in a manner that will not impair their suitability for wilderness designation by Congress. In accordance with Section 603 of FLPMA, until the Wilderness Study Area designation decision is final, the management limitations imposed by Section 603 apply to all Public Lands administered by BLM in the CDCA.

Pending procedures for interim management of Wilderness Study Areas were published by BLM in January 1979 for public review and comment. Copies of these procedures are available at all BLM offices in California, or can be obtained by writing to the BLM State Director, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825. Basically, the pending procedures say that activities taking place within an area which has been designated as a Wilderness Study Area can be expected to be allowed to continue during the interim management period, unless it is determined by BLM that the activities are adversely impacting wilderness values.

THE WILDERNESS PROVISION
OF THE
FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT
(P.L. 94-579)

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT WILDERNESS STUDY

Review; report to President. 43 USC 1782.

Sec. 603. (a) Within fifteen years after the date of approval of this Act, the Secretary shall review those roadless areas of five thousand acres or more and roadless islands of the public lands, identified during the inventory required by section 201(a) of this Act as having wilderness characteristics described in the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 890; 16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.) and shall from time to time report to the President his recommendation as to the suitability or nonsuitability of each such area or island for preservation as wilderness: *Provided*, That prior to any recommendations for the designation of an area as wilderness the Secretary shall cause mineral surveys to be conducted by the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines to determine the mineral values, if any, that may be present in such areas: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall report to the President by July 1, 1980, his recommendations on those areas which the Secretary has prior to November 1, 1975, formally identified as natural or primitive areas. The review required by this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with the procedure specified in section 3(d) of the Wilderness Act.

Report to President.

Recommendations to President of the Senate and Speaker of the House.

(b) The President shall advise the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of his recommendations with respect to designation as wilderness of each such area, together with a map thereof and a definition of its boundaries. Such advice by the President shall be given within two years of the receipt of each report from the Secretary. A recommendation of the President for designation as wilderness shall become effective only if so provided by an Act of Congress.

(c) During the period of review of such areas and until Congress has determined otherwise, the Secretary shall continue to manage such lands according to his authority under this Act and other applicable law in a manner so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness, subject, however, to the continuation of existing mining and grazing uses and mineral leasing in the manner and degree in which the same was being conducted on the date of approval of this Act: *Provided*, That, in managing the public lands the Secretary shall by regulation or otherwise take any action required to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands and their resources or to afford environmental protection. Unless previously withdrawn from appropriation under the mining laws, such lands shall continue to be subject to such appropriation during the period of review unless withdrawn by the Secretary under the procedures of section 204 of this Act for reasons other than preservation of their wilderness character. Once an area has been designated for preservation as wilderness, the provisions of the Wilderness Act which apply to national forest wilderness areas shall apply with respect to the administration and use of such designated area, including mineral surveys required by section 4(d)(2) of the Wilderness Act, and mineral development, access, exchange of lands, and ingress and egress for mining claimants and occupants.

Regulation.

***Ante*, p. 2751.**

16 USC 1131 note.

16 USC 1133.

THE WILDERNESS VALUE CRITERIA

OF THE

WILDERNESS ACT OF 1964
(P.L. 88-577)

DEFINITION OF A WILDERNESS

Sec. 2.(c) A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

PART II: DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVES

AREA 100

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the north and east by the California/Nevada State boundary; on the south, by a well-maintained access road to a stream diversion canal from McAfee Creek; and, on the west, by the Inyo National Forest RARE II area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is all public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This relatively flat appearing area is primarily a desert sage brush community, with light shades of green and brown colored vegetation. The slope is moderately upward from east to west to the foothills of the White Mountains, a RARE II area of the Inyo National Forest. The area is transversed east to west by a wash drainage and stream diversion from McAfee Creek.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This roadless area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The improvements that do exist, such as the stream diversion and access road from McAfee Creek along the southern boundary, are substantially unnoticeable due to vegetative screening by the sage brush and riparian vegetation. The area appears to be used primarily for grazing cattle, which does not substantially affect natural conditions.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude due to its relatively primitive character and an adjacent large roadless RARE II area to the west. Many opportunities for solitude are provided by the extensive topographical variations and varied vegetation which screens users from one another. The large size of the combined areas, varied topography, vegetation, the mountainous nature of the adjacent RARE II area and lack of man-made features provides for movement and diverse outstanding opportunities for an unconfined and primitive type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Specific comments were directed toward the natural integrity of the area and its adjacency to a RARE II area.

AREA 100A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Area boundaries are defined to the north and east by the California-Nevada border; and, to the south and west, by the Inyo National Forest RARE II area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is entirely public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of the very steep lower slopes of Juniper Mountain. Perry Aiken Creek splits the small roadless area. One peak within the area reaches an elevation of 6292 feet and supports a few pinyon trees.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

No improvements or marks from the works of man are apparent in the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation due to the relatively steep topography, primitive character of the landscape, and adjacent RARE II area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of comments received agreed with the findings.

AREA 101

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by an access road to the stream diversion from McAfee Creek; on the east and south, by the California/Nevada border and access road to Toler Creek; and, on the west, by the Inyo National Forest RARE II area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is all public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This low rolling area is primarily a sage brush community which moderately slopes upward from east to west to the foothills of the White Mountains, a RARE II area of the Inyo National Forest. The area is transversed east to west by two wash drainages from the Red Mountain area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The way bordering the eastern boundary and the way transversing the foothills in the western portion are not maintained and are substantially unnoticeable due to vegetative screening by the sage brush and the low rolling character of the terrain. The area is used primarily for grazing cattle, a use which does not substantially affect the natural conditions.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude due to its relatively primitive character, the adjacent RARE II area, extensive topographical variations, and varied vegetation which serves to screen users from one another. For the same reasons, there are many outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Lack of man-made features also provide for unconfined movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Specific comments supported the findings.

AREA 102

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This large area bordering the Fish Lake Valley is bounded on the north by the Toler Creek access road; on the east, by the California/Nevada border, Furnace Creek access road and Highway 3A; on the south, by the Indian Garden Creek Road; and, on the west, by the Inyo National Forest RARE II area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is all public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This large rolling area bordering the Inyo National Forest is a moderate east-facing slope that overlooks the Fish Lake Valley and is transversed east to west by many wash drainages. The vegetative cover appears to be primarily a uniform sage brush type community, with desert riparian vegetation in the washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The improvements that do exist, such as the way bordering the northern boundary and the jeep trail along Furnace Creek are not maintained and are substantially unnoticeable due to variation in terrain and vegetative screening. An access road to a functional windmill off Highway 3A in the southeastern portion of the area has been excluded, due to the maintained character of the road and the active use of the windmill by local ranching operations.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude due to its relatively primitive character, extensive topographical variations and varied vegetation, all of which serve to screen users from one another. For these reasons, and the lack of man-made features, there are many outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Specific comments supported the findings.

AREA 103

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by Indian Garden Creek Road; on the east, by Highway 3A and an access road from Oasis to Canyon Road; on the south, by the Cottonwood Creek Road; and, on the west, by the Inyo National Forest RARE II area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is predominately public land with approximately 10 percent non-public land in a block near Cottonwood Creek Road.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area has a variety of terrain. The eastern portion is a moderate east-facing slope overlooking the Fish Lake Valley. The central and western portions are mountainous foothills with varied rugged canyons where the National Forest boundary begins. The vegetation is predominately a light green sage brush community in the lower eastern portion. In the central and western portion the vegetation is a mixed shrub community with a sparse population of Pinyon pines and Juniper trees along the western mountainous edge bordering the National Forest.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The mining activity at Buck Mine access road and cemetery have been excluded. These exclusions, however, are substantially unnoticeable in most of the remainder of the roadless area due to the varied topography which screens these works of man. The few maintenance ways and jeep trails that exist are screened by the varied terrain and vegetative regrowth and are substantially unnoticeable. A short road to a windmill is excluded approximately one-half mile south of the northern boundary.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude. This is due to the area's relatively primitive character and adjacent large RARE II area. Many opportunities for solitude are provided by the extensive topographical variations, varied vegetation, and large size of the combined areas which screen users from one another. There are many outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The lack of man-made features provide for unconfined movement and diverse outstanding opportunities for unconfined and primitive type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of comments received supported the findings.

AREA 104

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by the Cottonwood Creek Road; on the east, by Highway 168; on the south, by the access road to White Mountain City and Wyman Creek; and, on the west, by the Inyo National Forest RARE II Area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is all public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This large mountainous area is the lower foothills portion of the eastern side of the White Mountains. The terrain is varied with abundant canyons. The foothills appear rounded with many unique rock formations and canyons. On the lower eastern slopes, a low mixed sage brush/shrub community occupies the terrain. The mountainous foothill area is covered with mixed shrub species, and a sparse Pinyon Pine/Juniper forest that extends into a RARE II Area of the Inyo National Forest.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has retained its primeval character and generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. Improvements, such as the Copper Queen Mine access road and a jeep trail have been excluded but are substantially unnoticeable from the surrounding natural area due to the topographical variation and screening vegetative regrowth.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area is adjacent to a RARE II Area and is relatively primitive in character, with outstanding opportunities for solitude provided by extensive topographical variations and varied vegetation. The lack of man-made features permits unconfined movement and diverse outstanding opportunities for an unconfined and primitive type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments support the findings.

AREA 105

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the north by the Wyman Creek Road and water diversion canal; on the west, by the Inyo National Forest RARE II Area; on the south, by a maintained dirt road to Antelope Spring; and, on the east, by Highway 168 and maintained dirt roads between Deep Springs maintenance station and White Mountain City, as well as other roads to mines within the roadless area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is entirely public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The terrain consists of an eroded bajada of moderate slope with several small washes draining from the lower slopes of the White Mountains which lie along the western edge.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area retains its primeval character. A few ways are present but are not substantially noticeable due to the vegetation and rolling nature of the bajada.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude due to its primitive character and adjacency to the RARE II Area. The large size of the combined areas and varied topography provide diverse recreational potential and outstanding opportunities for unconfined movement throughout.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Because of comments contesting road designations on earlier maps, further field checks were made and Areas 106 and 107 were combined with Area 105 to make a larger roadless area.

AREA 107A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north and west by the Inyo National Forest RARE II Area; on the east, by the Antelope Springs access road; on the south, by Highway 168.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is all public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Terrain is composed of a low-rolling, moderately sloping bajada on the east with several winding washes draining into the Deep Springs Valley. A small portion of foothills and canyons are present on the western boundary. The vegetative cover on the east-facing slope is predominately a light green mixed sage brush community. The foothills are sparsely vegetated with a few hardy mixed desert shrub and grass species. The washes have more mixed desert shrub species, especially within the foothill canyons.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has retained its primeval character, affected primarily by the forces of nature. The few ways that do exist are substantially unnoticeable due to vegetative screening and the sloping character of the low-rolling bajada.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are provided by the remoteness of the area and topographical variation. Lack of man-made features and adjacency of the RARE II Area provide outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Specific comments agreed with the findings.

AREA 109

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is enclosed by single lane, maintained dirt roads. The eastern boundary is formed by the Sylvania Canyon Road and the western boundary by Eureka Valley Road. The northern boundary is defined by Canyon Road. The southern border is a road which connects the Eureka Valley and Sylvania Canyon roads.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This small, rectangular, woodless area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments reflected that agricultural activities had reduced wilderness potential to a point where the area does not meet minimal wilderness criteria.

AREA 110

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is defined on the south, by the Sylvania Canyon Road; on the northeast by the California-Nevada State border; and, on the northwest, by a maintained dirt road that connects the state border with Sylvania Canyon Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5,000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of comments noted that agriculture has reduced the wilderness potential to a point where the area does not meet minimal wilderness criteria.

AREA 111

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the north by Sylvania Canyon Road; on the east, by the California/Nevada border; on the south, by the Cucomungo Canyon Road; and, on the west, by Eureka Valley Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is predominately public land, with only 3 percent of the area in random blocks of non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the California portion of the Sylvania Mountains, consisting of rugged mountains of varying rock types dissected by several large washes. Elevations range from 5200 feet in the far northwest to 7998 feet near the southeast. Plant types are of the sage brush community at lower elevatons and pinyon-juniper higher into the mountain range.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Mining occurs within the area to a very limited extent and on a small scale. Topographic screening virtually eliminates any impacts this mining might have on the natural conditions. To a noticeable degree, the entire area lacks the imprint of man's work upon the landscape.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The complex topography of the Sylvania Mountains, in combination with good vegetative cover, provides ample screening for visitors. The available isolation provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The lack of permanent improvements which would significantly alter the primeval character and influence of the land also provides the visitor with outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received support the findings.

AREA 112

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the north by the Cucomungo Canyon Road; on the east, by the California/Nevada border; on the south, by the Loretta Mine Road and access road; and, on the west, by the Eureka Valley Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is predominately public land with approximately 5 percent in random blocks of non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The area is mountainous with many deep canyons and a few springs. The rock formation in the northwestern Cucomungo Canyon contains many reds, yellows, blues, and purples of eroding rock formations. The Last Chance Range elevation is primarily 5000-8456 feet, with many canyons of varied rock formations. The vegetative cover on the Eureka Valley bajada and mid-elevations of the Last Chance Range is primarily a mixed Creosote Desert Shrub community. The higher elevations of the Last Chance Range are generally mixed desert shrubs with a Pinyon Pine/Juniper forest type of vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has generally retained its primeval character and appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. Those noticeable works of man which are present have been excluded; such as, the abandoned Crater Area mining operations and the Last Chance Spring Mine and access road. The extensive Crater Mining Area consists of many open pits, slag piles, and ways that significantly scar the natural condition of the area. The Last Chance Spring has a maintained access road, stock water source, building, and several open mining shafts. These areas have been excluded from wilderness consideration due to the substantially noticeable works of man which have degraded the natural condition of the immediate area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude, due to its relatively primitive character and natural condition. Extensive topographical variations and diverse vegetation which screen visitors provide freedom of movement without encroachment from man-made features. The varied topography and vegetation, along with the mountains and the lack of man-made features, provide for unconfined movement and diverse opportunities for a primitive type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments supported the findings and also pointed out varied recreational interests.

AREA 115

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area has as its eastern border Eureka Valley Road; as its southern border, Loretta Mine Road; as its northern and western borders, Highway 168, a maintained dirt road from Deep Springs College to Deep Springs Lake, and the Inyo National Forest boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 95 percent of the land is public land. Non-public holdings occur in scattered single sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the northern end of Eureka Valley and surrounding mountains which include, to the east, the lower Sylvania Mountains and, to the north and west, the abruptly rising Inyo Mountains. The valley floor ranges in elevation from 3400 to 4400 feet and consists of a sage brush plant community. The Sylvania Mountains to the east rise to 6179 feet through the Pinyon-Juniper plant community. To the west, the Inyo Mountains rise to 8692 feet. Through this wide range of elevations several plant communities occur; sage brush scrub and species associated with the white fir community. From the brushy valley floor, the Inyo Mountains have a Joshua Tree Woodland near the base. Cottonwood and willow dominate the lower canyons, while the upper reaches of these mountains are capped with coniferous types.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The impact of man's work is substantially noticeable in some areas, primarily as a result of extensive mining. In the southeast corner, the valley floor is pockmarked over a broad area of approximately 15 square miles. These assessment "scrapes" reduce the apparent naturalness of this portion of Eureka Valley. Elsewhere, moderate mining activity has occurred. A small-scale mining and access road is evident around Sugarloaf Mountain at the northern end of the area. Near the point where Loretta Mine Road leaves the Inyo Mountains and enters Eureka Valley, there is a relatively large-scale mining operation which is now apparently inactive. There are several mining structures and some large tanks for water and acid storage. These areas where the imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable are excluded from further wilderness consideration. Generally, the area retains its apparent naturalness throughout. The mining activity that occurs is generally screened from visitors by the rugged topography of the Inyo Mountains and by the diverse vegetation types. Areas where the imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable are excluded by the boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area. Areas excluded due to the absence of apparent natural condition occur near the point where Loretta Mine Road enters Eureka Valley, an area of approximately 15 square miles in the southeast corner of the roadless area, and portions of Deep Springs Valley west of the mountain valley interface.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The rugged topography of the Inyo Mountains and isolated canyons of the Sylvania Mountains provide ample separation from other visitors and afford an outstanding opportunity for solitude. From exposed slopes of these mountains, vistas of the Saline Range and other large features present a feeling of vastness further enhancing the sense of solitude. The area is composed of a diversity of terrain and vegetation which contribute to opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many specific comments which sought to clarify boundaries and evaluations of roads and ways and some including discussions of points in the Wilderness Act were received. Following field examination by staff, appropriate changes were made and are reflected in the current map and narrative.

AREA 116

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western border is defined by Highway 168. The eastern boundary is formed by a dirt road that leads into Deep Springs. An unnamed dirt road that connects Highway 168 with the Deep Springs Road is the northern border. To the south, an unnamed dirt road, which goes to Deep Springs Lake, completes the enclosure.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is nearly all public lands. One non-public section in the northwest corner is only partially within the boundary.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Deep Springs Valley lies at elevations between 4926 feet and 5200 feet. The vegetation is largely shadscale scrub with some lacustrine habitat associated with springs and water holes around Deep Springs Lake. The valley lies between the Inyo

Mountains and the White Mountains. Abrupt slopes rise to over 8000 feet in the Inyos and to over 10,000 feet in the White Mountains.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The many works of man are substantially noticeable and significantly affect the naturalness of the area. Several maintained buildings are present along the east border near Corral Springs. Improvements are used for ranching operations including maintenance of fences, windmill and watering troughs.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area is extremely flat. No topography or vegetative features break the even terrain to provide screening or outstanding opportunities for solitude. Also, the area lacks potential for a variety of forms of primitive and unconfined recreation due to even terrain and lack of vegetative influences.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments were directed toward road and/or way reclassification. Because of statements (pro and con) pertaining to the naturalness of the site, reevaluation was made; however, the impact of man on the area was found to be overriding.

AREA 117

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area includes the Saline Valley and the southern half of Eureka Valley. It is located adjacent to Death Valley National Monument which, in conjunction with a graded dirt road, forms the eastern boundary. The long western border is defined by the graded Saline Valley dirt road and a small portion of the Inyo National Forest. The southern edge is located along a spur off the Saline Valley Road to mining activity northwest of Ubehebe Peak. Another graded dirt road which forms the northern limit of the site, passes through the Joshua Flats area, and runs eastward into Nevada.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This site includes approximately 20 sections of non-public land which, except for a small concentration in the vicinity of the dry lake, are generally scattered.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Saline Valley, the Saline Range, Last Chance Range, Eureka Sand Dunes, Eureka Valley, and Inyo Mountains are the prominent physical features of the region. The landform changes from flat, white, dry lake to heavily vegetated salt marsh, to low rolling hills, to sand dunes, to rugged mountain ranges. Areas of highly colorful "badlands" topography can also be found. Vegetation is as varied as the topography. Within the dry salt lake there is no visible plant life at all. Adjacent to it, in the salt marsh, vegetation abounds and, although limited in the number of varieties, density provides an oasis-like green area in an otherwise barren environment. In the marsh, tall cat tails and other reedy plants thrive, as well as a dense growth of 'cat-claw'. Vegetation changes dramatically with elevation and dense stands of Pinyon Pines and Juniper Trees are abundant. At lower elevations are the grassy valleys, Joshua Trees, creosote and low shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Part of the northern portion of the area is currently being mined, with effects readily visible. This activity has degraded the naturalness of that site to the point where it no longer meets minimal criteria and has been excluded from further wilderness consideration. Other excluded portions are mining roads, mines, and dwellings in Jackass Flats. Three mineral hot springs are located in the Saline Valley. Two are heavily used for recreation, with permanent associated construction degrading the naturalness of the sites. The third spring is a protected desert pup fish habitat and is fenced with chain link to isolate the spring and the surrounding area. These springs are joined by a road which meets the Saline Valley Road. The access road, in addition to the area surrounding the springs, has been deleted from the potential Wilderness Study Area. Some remains of an old salt tram, which was used to transport salt in the early 1900's from Saline Valley over the Inyo Mountains to the city of Swansea, are still standing. The condition of these structures varies, but the historical importance of this tram far outweighs any degradation it might create to the primeval character of the site. There is a county-maintained road into Eureka Valley to the sand dune area. Eureka Valley otherwise retains its primeval character. In terms of overall impacts, man-made improvements are insignificant and entirely mitigated by the overwhelming size of the roadless area, topographical features, vegetation, and historical value.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The vastness of the area and the general absence of the effects of man's works provide a setting which supports a feeling of isolation and insures solitude. This roadless area will support an unlimited number of primitive types of recreation. The location next to administratively-endorsed wilderness in Death Valley National Monument further enhances primitive recreation potential.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were received which discussed all inventory considerations for the area. As a result, the area was reviewed in the field on several occasions and changes were made, where appropriate.

AREA 117A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is adjacent to administratively-designated wilderness areas in Death Valley National Monument to the east. The southern border is a maintained dirt road to mining claims in the Panamint Range. The western boundary is Saline Valley Road, and the northern boundary is a dirt road to mining claims in the Panamint Range.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site contains one-half section of non-public land along the southern boundary.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The boundaries include the lower slopes of the Panamint Range along the Death Valley National Monument boundary and a highly eroded south slope of Saline Valley. Elevations range from 1422 feet on the northern boundary to 3560 feet in the Panamint Range. The Creosote Bush Scrub plant community is the only type of vegetation represented.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

With the exception of a small area around mining claims along the north and south boundaries the entire area retains its natural character and is affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Located within Saline Valley, the area is adjacent to vast areas relatively untouched by the works of man. Opportunities for solitude are outstanding due to the vastness and remoteness of the area and adjacent land within the valley. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are also present.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments received because this particular area was created as a result of comments received on Area 117 which pointed out the existence of a road which became the northern boundary of this roadless area separating it from Area 117.

AREA 118

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is the most northern portion of Death Valley and is bounded on the north by a ranch/mine access road; on the northeast by the California/Nevada border; on the southeast by a ranch access road; and, on the southwest, by the Death Valley Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 90 percent public lands with one section of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is a flat to semi-rolling, southeast-facing, moderate slope. Vegetation is predominately a Creosote Bush Shrub plant community.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area generally has retained its primeval character and appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The few ways and mining claims are substantially unnoticeable due to the vegetative cover and the rolling and wash topography that screens these few works of man. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude due to the primitive character of the landscape, the varied topography and relatively dense bajada-type vegetative cover, and the scenic open vistas of a broad geographical area including the Last Chance Range and Gold Mountain. Outstanding opportunities for primitive types of recreation are available in this vast, largely untouched region.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received supported the findings.

AREA 119

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by a well-maintained spring and ranching access road; on the east, by the California/Nevada boundary; on the south, by the Death Valley National Monument; and, on the east, by the maintained Death Valley Road transversing the Last Chance Range to the Ubehebe Crater in Death Valley.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is predominately public land with approximately 2 percent in random blocks of non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains the western foothill portion of the Gold Mountain Range, which extends from Nevada into California. A low, rolling bajada fans eastward from the foothills to Death Valley, where two springs are located: Sand Spring and Little Sand Spring. The foothills generally appear rounded, with many canyons that gradually slope southwesterly onto a bajada, which is relatively flat and has numerous washes that drain into the sands of Death Valley. Vegetation is primarily a mixed desert shrub community with creosote, various cacti, and other species. The foothill area is rather sparse in vegetative cover. The bajada and valley contain lush springs which support marsh-type vegetation and several trees.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has retained its primeval character and generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The few ways and two developed springs within the area are substantially unnoticeable due to the topographic variation in terrain and the vegetative cover which substantially screen the developments. However, near Little Sand Springs, the presence of numerous burros noticeably degrades the area by reducing vegetative cover and fouling the water source.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The large size and extensive topographical variation of the bajada and foothills provide many secluded canyons and washes where outstanding opportunities for solitude can be found. The vast vistas of Death Valley and surrounding mountains provide unique views where man's work is substantially unnoticeable. The terrain variations also provide excellent opportunities for a primitive or unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments which addressed inventory criteria supported the findings. Some comments challenged the interpretation of roads and suggested that borders be deleted to combine numbered areas.

AREA 120

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located to the west of the Saline Valley, the area shares its western boundary with a RARE II Area of Inyo National Forest. Saline Road provides the eastern border, while the southern edge is defined by a mine road extending into the Inyo Mountains to the Blue Monster and Lucky Boy Mines.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 98 percent public land and includes only one non-public section.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Although primarily mountainous, the area does offer variations. The south and northeast are composed of relatively flat lands and bajadas, dissected by an occasional wash. To the north, the mountains and surface elevation increase. The terrain is highly eroded in many areas and numerous narrow canyons face out over Saline Valley. The variety of plant life changes rapidly with elevation. At the lowest points, vegetation is similar to that found in Saline Valley and is composed primarily of creosote and low desert shrubs. Variety and density increase at the higher elevations. At the crests, Pinyon Pine, Juniper and numerous other species can be found, supported by numerous varieties of low growing shrubs and annuals.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The lack of easy access and the rugged, steep terrain have restricted past use leaving the primeval character intact. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries, but exclude the following permanent improvements: the Waucoba Tungsten Mine and access road, an access road to a dwelling, and the Bunker Hill mine and access road from the southern boundary of the roadless area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The adjacent RARE II Area, the diversity of surface characteristics (canyons, valleys, rolling hills, vertical relief, rock outcrops), and the varying density and height of vegetation insure outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area provides numerous outstanding opportunities for a primitive or unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments which address inventory considerations refer to the presence of mining activity and roads penetrating the area which have been accounted for on the current map. Other comments support the natural condition and primitive recreational opportunity findings.

AREA 121

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is situated in the heart of Saline Valley and defined by three dirt roads. The base of this equilateral triangle shaped area is located along the Saline Valley Road, with the other sides formed by roads which join a short distance southwest of Lower Warm Springs.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site is composed entirely of public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The primary topographic feature is sand dunes, covering approximately 50 percent of the area. Land around these dunes is relatively flat and sandy, is fed by streams from both sides of the valley, with the only relief provided by hummocks and shallow washes. Run-off from the Inyo Mountains, plus underground water from the mineral hot springs, provides support for dense vegetative cover which stands out dramatically from the surrounding barren dry lake bottom. Visually, the dominant plant is cat-claw in tall, thick stands. Arrow-weed, mesquite, and marsh grasses, which have spilled over from the nearby wet-lands, are also present.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area shows evidence of off-road vehicle use through the dune system. Tracks are visible throughout many areas, but natural forces could rehabilitate the sandy surface. The remains of a few old, uninhabited structures are present and a maintained trailer site is plainly visible. A small water line runs underground, roughly parallel to the southernmost road, with occasional taps readily visible. The naturalness of specific areas is somewhat reduced, but not to the point where the entire site is degraded. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the boundaries of the roadless area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The low relief of the area provides little screening; however, the dense stands of cat-claw are a prominent feature and do provide some screening and isolation as an island of dense vegetation in the Saline Valley. The area offers outstanding primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments supported the findings.

AREA 122

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Long and relatively narrow, the area is located on the west side of Saline Valley between the Saline Valley Road and the Inyo National Forest. Its boundaries are formed by the Saline Valley Road on the east; the Inyo National Forest and California Desert Conservation Area boundary on the west; a dirt mining road to the Lucky Boy Mine on the north; and, the road over Cerro Gordo Peak through San Lucas Canyon along Lee Flat via the White Mountain Talc Road on the south.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site is composed entirely of public land, except for two random non-public areas totalling 800 acres.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Starting in the south, the Saline Valley Road drops dramatically through Grapevine Canyon to the floor of the Valley. The eastern slope of the Nelson Range rises rapidly. Outside of Grapevine Canyon, the terrain becomes relatively flat, with relief provided primarily by washes and low, rolling hills. Through the Saline Valley and into the Inyo Mountains, the terrain rises and becomes progressively more angular and coarse. The elevation changes from approximately 1000 feet at the valley floor to nearly 9000 feet in the north. Although there are localities where plant life is sparse, the vegetative cover is generally more dense and varied than that found in sites with less vertical relief. The lower elevations support creosote, cat-claw, annual grasses and low desert shrubs. Out of the valley floor, Joshua trees become the visually dominant plant, supported by other yucca, cactus and shrubs. In the higher elevations, dense stands of Pinyon Pine and Juniper are found. Grapevine Canyon is fed by numerous springs on the side of Hunter Mountain. These springs join and form a larger stream which parallels the road between Hunter Mountain and the valley. This water source supports a lush riparian belt composed of both native and introduced shrubs and trees.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

For the most part the site has remained natural but some scattered and mainly abandoned mining activities are evident at the base and on the lower slopes of the Inyo Mountains. This portion and an area between Willow Creek and Badwater Spring which displayed evidence of mining operations and supported human habitation, have been excluded from further wilderness consideration. A road is recognized up McElvoy Canyon. The Snow Flake Mine and access roads between Keynot and Beveridge Canyons are excluded. Another small area which reflects past mining activities is located between Hunter and Craig Canyons. Mining claim markers, diggings, and access routes are prominent. Although most of the mining operations appear to be abandoned, the naturalness within these excluded areas has been degraded by them. Lee Flat has also been excluded due to many roads and ways. In terms of the entire site, the visual effect of the impacted areas is minimal. The remainder of the area, which constitutes the majority of the land area, has remained natural and retained its primeval character. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries with appropriate exclusions for the permanent improvements mentioned above.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The site provides numerous outstanding opportunities for solitude. Its large size, canyons, valleys, uneven surfaces and variety of vegetation insure isolation and seclusion. The site's diverse topography also provides a unique setting for activities requiring large spaces and natural challenges as well as outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Specific comments refer to mining activity and access roads which were reevaluated by field checks and which are shown on the current map where appropriate. Nearly all comments recognized the primitive recreational potential and overall integrity of the geological features.

AREA 123

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is located at the junction of Panamint Valley, Saline Valley, and Death Valley and includes the northern and west-facing slopes of Hunter Mountain. The borders are formed by Death Valley National Monument on the north and east; Saline Valley Road to the west; and the road over Hunter Mountain to the south.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is composed entirely of public lands, except for a split land parcel on the northwest border.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Landform varies considerably, from the flat, uniform valley floor adjacent to Saline Valley to the coarse mountain tops adjoining Hunter Mountain. Within these limits, a broad spectrum of terrain types exist: bajada, sheer smooth walls, jagged rock outcrops, highly-eroded canyons and valleys, and plateaus. Plant life is as varied as the terrain, with changes related to elevation variation. In the lower areas of Saline Valley, the vegetation is basically creosote and low desert shrubs. Introduced grapes supplement the willow and other native plant life through Grapevine Canyon, which is lush, reflecting the abundance of water. Riparian environment continues up through the canyon, paralleling the road until it reaches the top of Hunter Mountain where natural springs support a thick stand of Pinyon Pine and Juniper in addition to other plants which abound in the area, including thick stands of sagebrush and annuals. Scenically, the area includes outstanding views of both the Sierra Nevada along the Mt. Whitney Crest and into Death Valley National Monument.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has maintained its natural appearance and the effects of man's works are substantially unnoticeable. Some evidence of cattle grazing exists and some small water tanks, plastic piping and corral facilities are present. Former, small-scale mining activity is also apparent, but extremely local in nature. The overall impact of these works of man is limited but not degrading to the naturalness of the area. A road to Spanish Spring is maintained from the Hunter Mountain Road. The road proceeds along the Death Valley National Mounment border beyond the turn to Spanish Spring to mining activity just south of Ulida Flat. With the exception of the Spanish Spring Road, boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundary.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

An extremely varied topography, supported by an equally diverse vegetative pattern, insures areas of outstanding opportunity for solitude. The area's size, combined with the ability of the terrain and thick vegetative stands to screen visitors, adds to the seclusion. Man's works are not apparent in the area, and there are no conflicting activities which might restrict movement. The diversity of the area lends itself to primitive types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The road to Spanish Spring and further to Ulida Flat was added as the result of comments received. Other comments support the findings regarding natural condition and opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

AREA 124

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The site is located east of Owens Lake. The western boundary is Highway 138 and a wooden pole utility line right-of-way. The northern border is formed by a road through Lucas Canyon extending over Cerro Gordo Peak to Keeler. The eastern boundary is composed of the White Mountain Talc Road and the Saline Valley Road. The southern boundary is Highway 190.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site incorporates one section of non-public land, which accounts for approximately 2 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area encloses the southern end of the Inyo Mountains, the Santa Rosa Hills and the Santa Rosa Flats. These combine to provide a multitude of transitional areas and a constantly changing landscape. Generally, the southwestern portions are formed by bajadas which rise to meet the rugged volcanic lava flow known as the Malpais Mesa. The areas at the southern end are flat, rising to low rolling hills and the lava flow. Rugged valleys, deep canyons, sheer mountain sides, meadows, and mesas can all be found within a short distance of each other. In the eastern section of the area, the transition to the Inyo Mountains is made by gradual landform changes between the Santa Rosa Hills and the Santa Rosa Flats. Plant life is as varied as the landform. On the western side, near Owens Dry Lake, vegetation is extremely sparse. Creosote, supported by low desert shrubs and grasses, dominates the bajada. The transition from desert creosote to mountain Pinyon Pine and Juniper is unique. This change continues over the crest and down the eastern slope, where large stands of Joshua Trees provide the transition back to a desert environment.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The northern section of the roadless area, in the vicinity of Cerro Gordo Peak, has been extensively mined. Shafts, tailings, abandoned mining equipment and structures, plus a network of ways, lace the area. The impact of this activity has so degraded the naturalness of the northern portion that it has been excluded from further consideration for wilderness designation. Approximately one and one-half miles south of Keeler, a road leads to mining activity three miles inside the roadless area. Approximately three miles south of Keeler, another road penetrates to a mining activity site two miles within the roadless area. Roads and mining activity sites are also excluded around the White Swan, Viking, and patented Santa Rosa mines. The large exclusion in the north includes the Sunset, Morning Star, and Belmont mines and their accesses. The ruggedness of the mountain terrain tends to localize the impacts of these improvements in relation to the entire roadless area, resulting in the presence of a large area which retains its primeval character and is subjected primarily to the forces of nature. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries excluding the roads and mine areas mentioned except on the west where the 4200 foot contour line has been followed to exclude water diversions and debris along Highway 138 to where it crosses Highway 190. The boundaries of the large exclusion at the northern end are along the road to Belmont Mine, following jeep trails and canyons to the Morning Star and Sunset mines. These potential Wilderness Study Area boundaries encompass an area where the works of man are substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The varied landform and the diverse vegetative patterns provide numerous areas of isolation. The network of spaces generated by mountainsides, rock outcrops, depressions, washes, tall creosote, Joshua Trees, Pinyon Pine and Junipers insures outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area also provides users with outstanding areas where unrestricted movement in all directions is possible.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A large number of comments were general in nature and referred to motorized recreational interest. Those relating to inventory criteria were split between ones which recognized the area for natural values and ones indicating the presence of roads and mining activity. Some very specific comment was received showing exact locations of roads. These were field-checked and nearly all were added to the map.

AREA 127

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area incorporates the entire northern portion of Panamint Valley and extends into the hills which surround the valley on the north, east, and west sides. Its northeastern limit is Death Valley National Monument and its southern border is Highway 190. A paved road, which runs through the Santa Rosa Hills, forms its western edge. An excellent, graded road extending into Hunter Mountain provides the northern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Less than four sections of non-public land are scattered within the boundaries and account for less than 3 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Generally, the site can be compared to a saucer. Panamint Valley represents the lower portion and includes a flat, dry lake bed, with only the Lake Hills providing vertical relief. In the northern part, well up on the bajada, a relatively small, but extremely interesting, dune system is developing. To the west, the bright and varied colors of Rainbow Canyon provide an introduction to the unique topography of the higher elevations of Darwin Plateau. Plateaus, low, rolling hills, bajadas, rocky outcrops, and rugged mountain canyons, valleys and peaks are all present. Vegetation is varied from the dry lake bottom, which provides too hostile an environment for most plant life, to the rich, lush Pinyon-Juniper forests on the highest peaks. Creosote, bunch grasses, desert holly, Joshua Trees, plus a large number of annuals are all present and add to the diversity of the site.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Except for small portions, where the effects of man's activities are present, the entire area has retained its natural condition and appears to have been acted on solely by the forces of nature. The Big Four Mine, below Panamint Butte, the Father Crowley Point Monument, the Lee Mines on Lee Flat, and the grazing operations on Hunter Mountain are the only evidence of man's work. The mines appear to be nonoperational, with only local impact. The Valley is occasionally used for supersonic flight tests. Signs have been posted to indicate the possibility of sonic booms. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the boundaries of the roadless area with exceptions for the Big Four Mine and access road and portions of the southern Santa Rosa Hills and Lee Flat south of Wilson Ranch.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The overall diversity of terrain, areas of tall, dense vegetation, and extreme elevation changes ensure numerous outstanding opportunities for solitude. Lack of evidence of man's works ensures unrestricted, outstanding opportunities for recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were of a general nature expressing motorized recreational interest. Other comments supported the findings regarding natural condition and primitive recreational opportunities.

AREA 129

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located to the west of Panamint Valley, the site's boundaries are formed by two paved roads and two graded and maintained dirt roads. Highway 190 forms the southeastern edge. The Saline Valley Road marks the northwestern edge. The southern border is composed of a series of dirt mining roads which run to the north of (and roughly parallel to) Highway 190. The northeastern border is defined by a dirt road connecting Highway 190 to the Santa Rosa Hills area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site includes approximately two parcels of non-public land which account for roughly 10 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The roadless area is situated at the southern end of the Inyo Mountains and incorporates a variety of terrain ranging from flat to low rolling hills to rougher, mountainous landforms. Although not as highly eroded or rugged in appearance as some of the surrounding areas, the site does reflect some variation in the forms of shallow canyons and washes. Vegetation is limited throughout. Creosote and Joshua trees are the visually dominant plant life on the site. These are supported by typical, low, desert shrubs and grasses. Generally, vegetation tends to be sparse when compared to surrounding areas.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The southern portion of the site has been mined extensively in the past. The remains of abandoned operations are evident. Tailings, mine shafts, remnants of structures, debris and old machinery can be found throughout. The area is still supporting many active mining operations, and the movement of both heavy equipment and trucks is common. Numerous claim markers are scattered throughout the area. The scope of past and present mining activities in the south has severely impacted the entire site. Due to its relatively small size, the extensive mining operations have degraded naturalness to the point where the area does not meet minimum criteria for futher consideration.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Activities in the southern portion of the site severely limit any outstanding opportunities for solitude within the roadless area. The small size, and restrictions imposed by ways, claims and mining in general, and the lack of variety preclude outstanding opportunities for solitude or for primitive or unconfined recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received pertaining to this site were almost equally divided between support for inclusion of all, or part of the site as a study area, to complete exclusion, based on the scope of past and current mining operations. A recheck of the area confirmed degradation of naturalness due to activities of man, and did not support the need for a change in designation.

AREA 130

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located north of the Coso Mountain range, the area's northwestern boundary is Highway 190. The northeastern boundary is a powerline right-of-way and road. The southeastern boundary is an improved dirt road, and the southwestern boundary is a maintained dirt road used for access to the Sierra Talc Mine.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is all public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Topography is diverse, with smooth mountains, gentle sloping bajadas, interior valleys, and sheer bluffs. The mountains rise gradually from the bajadas and have smooth ridges and rounded peaks. The bajadas on the north and south drain north toward Highway 190 and east towards the Inyo Mountains. Within the mountains are relatively large interior valleys and small washes, giving the landform a rolling appearance. In the center, numerous bluffs with sheer faces and flat tops add to the diversity. The vegetation is typical, with the dominant plant being Creosote Bush Scrub. Associated with the creosote are other sparse, low desert shrubs and annual plants.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Along the western boundary are a few primitive ways, one leading to a favorite informal campsite used by local visitors. None detract from the overall naturalness of the area. However, substantially noticeable surface grading scars are located in the northern portion of this roadless area and have been excluded from further wilderness consideration because they significantly alter the natural landscape. A wood pole utility line without a maintenance road parallels the northeastern boundary. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries but exclude the far northern corner and the wood pole utility line site.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of the area's extreme diversity in terrain and available vegetative screening, outstanding opportunities for solitude exist. Because of the diverse topography and pristine nature of the area, outstanding opportunities for a variety of primitive and unconfined types of recreation exist. Besides having its own diverse scenery, the area offers beautiful vistas of both the Sierra Nevada to the west and, to the east, Cerro Gordo Peak in the Inyo Mountains.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Some comments refer to motorized recreational interests in the area. Others challenged the classification of the road along the southwestern boundary. Further field examination supported the findings.

AREA 131

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located south of Owens Lake. Its northeastern boundary is a series of maintained mining roads between Lower Centennial Flat and Highway 190. The northwestern boundary is Highway 190. The western boundary follows the powerline access road that parallels U.S. 395 and extends to the northwest corner of the China Lake U.S. Naval Weapons Center. The eastern boundary follows the east side of the Coso Range to the Naval Weapons Center. The southern boundary parallels the northern border of the Weapons Center.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists primarily of public lands, with approximately 4 percent of the area being scattered blocks of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes the northern section of the Coso Mountain range, associated bajadas, and Joshua Flat. The mountains are rugged, displaying volcanic activities and extensive erosion with numerous interior valleys and washes. A gently sloping bajada, leading towards Owens Lake, is interlaced with washes. Cactus Flat is an interior valley in the Coso Range, with high scenic quality. Joshua Flat, another interior valley, is surrounded by mountains which rise more gently. Lower Centennial Flat is a bajada, interlaced with numerous washes which give it a hilly appearance. The vegetation of the area changes as the elevation changes. In the lower bajadas, where the soil is sandy, the vegetation is very sparse. Further up the bajadas is scattered creosote, low desert shrubs, and annual plants. Joshua Flat has large stands of Joshua Trees and cactus such as Pencil Cholla.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The Cactus Flat area and associated bajada has been mined extensively in the past. There are numerous bulldozing scars, many shafts, and large slag piles. Each mine has a minimum of one access road, which also detracts from the naturalness of the area. Because of these permanent improvements, this portion has been excluded from further wilderness study. Other portions that have been excluded are: (1) The Olancha Sand Dune area, which is covered with improved roads and ways, and no longer appears undisturbed by man; (2) Lower Centennial Flat, with scars left by mining and numerous roads and ways running throughout the flat which are easily noticeable; (3) the area southwest of the town of Darwin, because of evidence of both past and present mining activity, extensive bulldozing and heavy equipment; and (4) the area surrounding and including McCloud Flat, because of evidence of extensive mining activity in the form of roads, ways, large slag piles, and abandoned shafts. The remaining portion of this area, which contains the Coso Mountains and Joshua Flat, with volcanic mesas and varied topographic features, meets wilderness criteria. There are a few ways on the bajadas, but they do not substantially detract from the naturalness.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of the area's diverse terrain, bajadas, rugged mountains, and interior valleys, outstanding opportunities for solitude exist. The vastness of the large flats, combined with the surrounding mountains, lend themselves to a feeling of solitude. Due to the lack of man's permanent improvements, and the variety of topography, outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation exist. Outstanding views of the Sierra and Inyo ranges enhance the experience.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

The area is known for its outstanding volcanic displays, large outcroppings of obsidian, and evidence of Paiute Indian habitation.

VII. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A large number of comments were received indicating motorized recreational interest. Other comments, which were directed at inventory considerations, argued the presence or absence of natural conditions in those portions of the roadless area not identified as possessing wilderness characteristics, but no further changes in the findings were appropriate.

AREA 132

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located west of the town of Trona. The northern boundary is a paved road leading to a small community in Homewood Canyon. The eastern and southern boundaries are Highway 178. The western boundary is the border of U.S. Naval Weapons Center at China Lake.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 30 percent of the area is non-public land scattered throughout in both large and small blocks.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area's diverse topography includes the southern Argus Mountains and associated bajada. Argus Mountains are a rugged range having jagged ridges, sharp peaks, and deep, sheer-faced canyons. The mountains reach an elevation of over 4,500 feet, some 3,000 feet above the valley. The range appears striated due to ancient sedimentation and has a variety of colors from reds to browns to oranges to golds. The associated bajada gently slopes to the east and is interlaced with numerous washes, giving it a hilly appearance. The vegetation is mixed desert shrub, with the dominant plant being creosote. There are also numerous annual plants. In the higher elevations, the vegetation is sparse to nonexistent.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Many parts of this area show signs of man's permanent improvements: (1) The area surrounding and including Homewood Canyon is scattered with scars from current mining and private homes, interlaced with numerous roads and ways leading to both current and abandoned mines; (2) A maintained road leading into Rattlesnake Canyon, is graded and easily seen; (3) The zone between the base of the Argus Mountains and the eastern boundary south of Rattlesnake Canyon to Trona is laced with roads and ways leading to abandoned mines, displays extensive bulldozing and scars, and contains a water pipeline and improved access road; (4) The zone surrounding the town of Trona includes the chemical plant and the railroad; (5) The area south of Trona with signs of extensive off-road vehicle use shows some permanent scars and is laced with powerlines. Although the remaining section of the area has retained some of its primeval character, it is scattered with an abundance of non-public lands that equals about half of the entire area.

The small, 9 1/2 section area, possessing wilderness values contains the Great Falls Basin, in the Argus Range. It is bordered on the west by the U.S. Naval Weapons Center; on the north by the north edge of Sections 1 and 2 (T24S, R42E); on the east by the eastern edges of Sections 1 and 12, the north and east edge of Section 18, and a line from the northeast corner to the southwest corner of Section 19, all in (T24S, R42E); on the south, by the southern edges of Sections 23 and 24, (T24S, R42E). This small area is affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. A way crosses the extreme northwest corner of the area, to a spring. Some old and unmaintained spring developments exist, in the form of pipes and small cement boxes, in the Great Falls Basin and Indian Joe Canyon. They have an insignificant effect upon the area. Since the area is extremely steep and rugged, off-road scars are non-existent. Approximately 10 percent of this natural area is non-public land.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Parts of this area have outstanding opportunities for solitude because of the diverse landform of the rugged Argus Mountains. Visitors are easily screened from one another because of the deep canyons, jagged ridges and sharp peaks. The diverse terrain provides outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many of the comments addressing the inventory indicated the presence of man's work in the area. Many other comments stated that portions of the area had wilderness values. A recheck of the area identified a portion of the area meeting 2(c) criteria. Other comments received dealt with study phase issues.

AREA 132A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary of the roadless area is Highway 190. The western border is Darwin Road. A blacktop road running east from Darwin forms the southern boundary, while a maintained dirt road in Darwin Canyon forms the eastern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is all public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the southern end of the Darwin Plateau, several deep canyons associated with it, and the Darwin Hills, which are located near the town of Darwin. The Darwin Plateau, which lies generally at 4000 feet, is cut by deep chasms, exposing volcanic rock faces and providing a variety of exposures and soil types. Spring-fed creeks within the canyons create lush shaded canyon floors. Darwin Falls and China Garden Spring are spectacular areas where falls and shaded pools provide proper growing conditions for a variety of mosses, ferns, and other riparian vegetation. The plateau region is in the northern half with depressions and canyons that cut through the mesa or plateau. In the southern half, prominent features above the ground include the Darwin Hills, foothills of the northern end of the Argus Range. The hills themselves and surrounding bajadas support plant associations representative of the Joshua Tree Woodland and sagebrush scrub communities.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable over a large portion of the area, particularly in the southern half. At the extreme southern end is the town of Darwin. Habitations associated with the town extend north along the west side of the Darwin Hills, which are extensively mined throughout their length. This mining and associated road and way development give the impression that the area is no longer affected primarily by the forces of nature. Other scattered mining activity with access roads is apparent through much of the southern half of the roadless area. In a portion of the northern half, man's influence upon the primeval character of the land is much less noticeable. Mining activity is nonexistent, and road and way development minimal. The deep, long canyons in this volcanic area are unimpacted by man's works. The northern half retains its primeval character and comprises the potential Wilderness Study Area. The boundaries of this area are common with the northern roadless area boundary from its intersection with Darwin Canyon Road to its intersection with Hunter Mountain Road. The eastern boundary is common with the roadless area boundary to China Garden Spring Road. The potential Wilderness Study Area boundary parallels the north side of China Garden Spring Road and continues northwest across the valley in unsurveyed sections to the northern roadless area boundary.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The deep, quiet canyons which penetrate the southern end of the Darwin Plateau provide isolation from other visitors, thus providing outstanding opportunities for solitude. The unique riparian habitat and winding canyons provide for outstanding opportunities for many types of unconfined and primitive types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments reflected the variety of activities in the area and concurred with the findings.

AREA 132B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by Highway 190; on the east, by a combination of dirt maintained roads and the Panamint Valley Road; on the south, by a maintained dirt road in Homewood Canyon; and, on the west, by the U.S. Naval Weapons Center at China Lake.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is predominantly public land with 5 random blocks of non-public land comprising approximately 5 percent of the land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The Argus Range, which dominates the area, forms a long, narrow mountain chain along the west side of Panamint Valley. The range rises to a maximum of 8839 feet. The foothills are covered with low desert shrubs of the creosote scrub plant community. Steeper slopes along the range are relatively free of vegetation, while many higher points along the ridgeline are covered with pinyon-juniper. Several large canyons penetrate the range from the east.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The eastern side of the Argus Mountain chain is the scene of much development which alters the primeval character of the landscape. This development occurs in the form of mining operations of various sizes and their associated access roads. Scattered mining activity occurs east of Darwin Canyon. In the northern Argus Range, an apparently abandoned mining operation has little impact in Osborne Canyon. Just south of Osborne, in the next three canyons (Stone Canyon, Thompson Canyon, and Snow Canyon), large-scale mining activity occurs with numerous prospects and smaller sites which reduce the apparent naturalness of these canyons significantly. Just south of Snow Canyon is Panamint Quarry, an active large-scale operation with paved access road from the south, which is part of the roadless area boundary. Further south, small mining areas with human habitation affect the primeval character of the land between Bendire Canyon and Shepherd Canyon. More light mining occurs south to the low saddle where the Slate Range joins the Argus Range. Numerous small mines with habitation occur in Orondo Canyon and in Homewood Canyon. The bajada adjacent to the Argus Range in Searles Valley is laced with maintained and unmaintained access routes which run between canyons and mining operations, dwellings and water sources, as well as recreation sites. Generally, the naturalness of this bajada has been nullified by these impacts of man's presence. The impacts of much of the mining activity are not screened by their location and have been excluded from wilderness consideration. The northern portions of this large, mountainous area appear to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The complexity of the terrain provides a high degree of screening which tends to isolate visitors and localize the impacts of some improvements within the area. Particularly in the northern portion of the roadless area where less mining occurs, the combination of vegetative diversity and topographic relief provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several comments indicate the presence of mining areas and roads. Portions were excluded from wilderness consideration following further field examinations.

AREA 133

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the northwest and southwest by maintained mining access roads and on the east and south by the boundary to the U.S. Naval Weapons Center at China Lake.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5,000 acres of contiguous public land, nor is it of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments received were on study phase considerations and not on the evaluation of the area.

AREA 134

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is Highway 190. The western boundary is the Panamint Valley Road; the southern boundary, Wildrose Canyon Road; the eastern boundary, Death Valley National Monument.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is approximately 95 percent public lands. Three sections of non-public lands are scattered throughout the area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Topography is varied. Elevations range from 1600 feet in Panamint Valley to 6200 feet in the Panamint Mountains. The steep mountains of the northeast are cut by a series of deep canyons from which gently sloping alluvial fans issue to the western edge. The naturally broken and eroded hills of the southeast give the area a "badlands" appearance. The western half consists of low rolling hills. In the northwest portion a small dry lake is present. Vegetation varies with substrata and elevation. The alluvial fans are dominated by a sparse and regular growth of Creosote Bush and desert holly. Creosote in the washes and canyons is not dense, but grows to a greater height. The steep slopes show little or no vegetation. The area is utilized by Bighorn Sheep and is extremely scenic in all terrains.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is pristine and remains in an undeveloped primeval character. It is without permanent improvements or human habitation and is affected primarily by the forces of nature. A few primitive ways are located in the area; however, none affect the naturalness of the area. A small mining claim is on the western boundary at Hill 1822. Due to its close proximity to the border, and screening by the hill, the claim has little effect on the naturalness of the land.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are easily obtained in the area. No roads or boundaries are present to encroach upon freedom of movement. The ruggedness of the mountainous terrain, with its deep canyons, serves to screen visitors from one another. In the gullies, visitors are out of sight and sound from one another due to the topographic nature of the "swell and swale" landscape. Solitude can be obtained on the alluvial fans due to large size and slight rolling aspects. The variety of the terrain and overall gentleness of the slope present many opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received agree with findings.

AREA 136

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is in the Panamint Mountains; bordered on the east and north by Death Valley National Monument and Wildrose Canyon Road; on the west, by a county-maintained road, known as Indian Ranch Road; and, on the south, by the road running up Pleasant Canyon east from Ballarat.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 95 percent public lands. The non-public lands are in two separate pieces, along the western boundary.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Basic topography is rugged mountains and deep canyons. Included in the area are the small, steep alluvial fans which issue forth from the canyons, to the immediate west of the mountains and a small area of naturally broken hills and "badlands" in the extreme northwestern area. The small, steep fans and the badlands tend to be rocky and grey. The fans have many small washes cutting them, while the hilly areas have small gullies and channels cutting them. Vegetation varies with the substrate and elevation. The badlands and fans have widely spaced Creosote Bush Scrub and Desert Holly as the dominant plant forms. The canyons have extensive riparian plants, such as cottonwoods and willows. At increased elevations, are the Great Basin Sagebrush, and the Pinyon Pine-Juniper belt. Still higher, Limber Pine is encountered on the highest slopes, with Great Basin Sagebrush as the chief under-story plant. The rocky areas of 1200 to 4000 feet support the Panamint Daisy which is a rare and endangered plant species. The area contains one of the last remaining refuges for Desert Bighorn Sheep. Also found in this area is an indigenous species of lizard, the Panamint Alligator Lizard, as well as an indigenous sub-species of Speckled Rattlesnake. The area also contains the Panamint City ruins at the end of Surprise Canyon.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Maintained roads penetrate this area from the west and follow Jail, Surprise, Happy, and Jackpot Canyons. A maintained road in Jail Canyon winds south from a point one-half mile west of the mine in Jail Canyon to a spring in Hall Canyon. Near the end of Suprise Canyon a road winds north up Sourdough Canyon for about two and one-half miles. This road then breaks off to the northwest for another mile to a heavily mined area. Patented mining claims have been excluded from wilderness consideration in the Panamint City area. An additional road heads north off Happy Canyon Road to another heavily mined area. One more road leads north off the end of Jackpot Canyon Road. It winds north and then east to a point about one mile north of Clair Camp. Additionally three short roads lead north near the end of Pleasant Canyon. The easternmost of these roads is up Mormon Gulch. Lastly, a road runs about 1.5 miles to the AB Mine in the extreme northwest corner of the area. Roads in canyons and the badlands area have little or no effect on the naturalness of the surrounding areas due to the topographic screening. The walls of these canyons tower several hundred feet from the canyon floors rendering road improvements and mining scars substantially unnoticeable. These canyon roads and mining areas have been excluded from further wilderness study, but their overall effect on even immediately adjacent areas are negligible. At the mouth of Hall Canyon is a small Indian reservation known as the Indian Ranch Reservation which has no effect on the naturalness of the area but has been excluded because it is not public lands. The rest of the area is in an undeveloped state that retains its primeval character. There are no permanent improvements, and it is affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude exist throughout the area. In the badlands area, the topographic features allow visitors to be out of sight and sound from one another within relatively short distances. Opportunities for solitude are abundant in the mountain areas due to topographic screening at the lower altitude, and the topographic and vegetational screening at higher altitudes. Additionally these opportunities are further enhanced by the location of the area adjacent to existing wilderness values in Death Valley National Mounment.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments delineate mining roads and activity. All were field-checked and appear on the map as appropriate. A substantial number of comments addressed the primitive recreation opportunities for the region.

AREA 137

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located northeast of the town of Trona in the western Panamint Mountains. The western boundary is a graded gravel road in Panamint Valley along the base of the mountains; the southern boundary, an improved access road through Goler Wash to Mengel Pass; the eastern boundary, the Death Valley National Monument boundary; and, the northern boundary, an improved road through South Park Canyon.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

With the exception of patented mining claims the area is entirely public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of the area varies from bajadas to steep, rugged mountains with large washes and canyons. The bajadas slope gently to the west and are interlaced with washes. Just east of the bajadas, the terrain changes abruptly to the steep jagged Panamint Mountain range. This range rises over 6000 feet above the valley, having very jagged ridges, sharp peaks and deep canyons. The variety of vegetation is extensive, beginning with sparse desert shrubs, such as creosote, and annual plants in the bajadas, leading to a pinyon-juniper woodland in the higher elevations. Within the canyons, water flows in large quantities providing a riparian community with such plants as Desert willow, cottonwoods and Typha.

VI. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has few permanent improvements. Mining areas along the north and south boundaries have been excluded from further wilderness study. A few aerial cableways run onto the canyon walls to small patented Radcliffe and World Beater Mines. These have not been excluded as their impact is not substantial. From the western boundary the road to the mouth of Coyote Canyon, the road and mining activity at Manly Fall, and roads and mining activity in sections 35 and 36 (T. 22 S., R. 44 E.) have been excluded, even where these mines are inactive, because the natural condition has been significantly impaired. The remainder of the area comprises a large block of public land where the imprint of man is substantially unnoticeable and forms the potential Wilderness Study Area. The boundaries of this potential study area are common with the roadless area boundaries, unless otherwise noted in this section.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the nature of the terrain, outstanding opportunities for solitude exist. The diverse landform lends itself to a variety of outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

This area contains two California State-listed rare and endangered plant species: Panamint Daisy and Knap Brickell Bush.

VII. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were received relating to the existence of roads, mines, and other permanent improvements. Field examinations verified many of these, causing the division of the Area into Area 137 and Area 137A. Other comments recognized the primitive recreation potential and overall natural condition of the landscape.

AREA 137A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western boundary is a graded road in Panamint Valley along the base of the Panamint Mountains; the southern boundary, an improved road through South Park Canyon; the western boundary, improved dirt roads connecting South Park, Middle Park, and Pleasant Canyon; the northern boundary, the road through Pleasant Canyon from Ballarat to Middle Park.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

With the exception of patented mining properties, the entire area is public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of the area varies from bajadas to steep, rugged mountains with large washes and canyons. The bajadas slope gently to the west and are interlaced with washes. Just east of the bajadas, the terrain changes abruptly to the steep jagged Panamint Mountain range. This range rises over 7000 feet above the valley, having very jagged ridges, sharp peaks and deep canyons. The variety of vegetation is extensive, beginning with sparse desert shrubs, such as creosote, and annual plants in the bajadas, leading to a Pinyon-Juniper Woodland in the higher elevations. Within the canyons, water flows in large quanities providing a riparian community with such plants as desert willow, cottonwoods and typha.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is largely subject to the forces of nature. A few areas isolated in the deep canyons show the imprint of man and have been excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Area, as follows: 1) Roads through Middle Park Canyon to the Goldbug Mine and the tram and way north to Pleasant Canyon; 2) the road and mined areas at the Worldbeater Mine; 3) Roads and ways in Middle Park and South Park; 4) Road and mining activity at the Suitcase Mine in South Park Canyon. All patented mining properties are also excluded. The remainder of the roadless area is in unaltered condition where the works of man are absent. This region where the forces of nature are the only evident forces comprises the potential Wilderness Study Area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The dramatic terrain provides secluded canyon areas and broad expansive views from the ridgetops. Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are assured by these features.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were received on Area 137 relating to the existence of roads, mines, and other permanent improvements. Field examinations verified many of these, causing the division of the original area into Areas 137 and 137A. Other comments recognized the primitive recreation potential and overall natural condition of the landscape.

AREA 138

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the east by Panamint Valley Road; on the north, by the road to Snow Canyon; on the south, by the State Range Road; and, on the west, by a paved road to Kerr-McGee Quarry and the Nadeau Trail.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains approximately 5 percent non-public land along the western border.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Topography is very uniform, consisting of a bajada gently sloping eastward, with a few hills and rises along the western side. A few small washes issue from the Argus Range. Vegetation is dominated by a sparse even growth of Creosote Bush and includes desert trumpet and Spiny Chorizanthe. Soil is basically sandy and white, with a few rocks of grey color. The hilly sections of the west are rocky and dark yellow-brown in color.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has a few ways, off-road vehicle scars, and bulldozing scars which do not appreciably affect the naturalness of the land. It retains its natural character and is without permanent improvements.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are lacking due to lack of vegetational cover; hence, visitors are not screened from one another even at great distances. Primitive recreation is possible in the area; however, the visitor feels confined.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received recommend consideration of this area as part of a larger Panamint Valley study area.

AREA 138A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the south by the road to Snow Canyon; on the west, by the Nadeau Trail; on the north, by Minnietta Road; on the east, by Panamint Valley Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is entirely public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The eastern edge of the area consists of a gently sloping bajada with hills in the western portion. There are a few washes draining from the Argus Mountains. Creosote Bush, though the dominant plant, is sparse throughout.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area retains its primeval character except for a primitive way bisecting the mid-section.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the relatively flat terrain, small size, and lack of vegetative screening the area does not contain outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most public comments recommend this roadless area be included within a greater Panamint Valley study area.

AREA 139

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located west of Panamint Valley, bounded on the north by Slate Range Road; on the west, by the Kerr-McGee limestone quarry access road; and, on the east and south, by Highway 178.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is primarily public land, with only 3 percent devoted to non-public sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The terrain is generally uniform, consisting mainly of a gently sloping bajada and a few hills. The bajada is interlaced with washes, giving the landform a slightly rolling appearance. The hills, located at the southern end, rise about 200 feet above the bajada and cover an area of about two square miles. Vegetation consists of low desert shrub, including desert holly, desert trumpet and brittle bush, with creosote the dominant plant. Associated with the shrubs are scattered annuals.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature. There is a primitive way in the southern section, and a few jeep trails along the western boundary. These ways have a minimum effect on the general naturalness.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are limited because of relatively flat terrain and low desert vegetation. Without topographical or vegetational screening, visitors could easily see one another, even though long distances apart. Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined type of recreation are also limited, because of the relatively flat terrain and low desert vegetation. These limiting factors serve to exclude the area from further wilderness consideration.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received indicated a desire to treat the Panamint Valley as a whole and as a logical extension of the Death Valley National Monument.

AREA 140

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located in Panamint Valley; bordered on the west by Highway 178; on the south by Ballarat Road; and, on the north and east, by Indian Ranch Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is public lands except for a few fringe areas of non-public portions, accounting for approximately only 2 percent of the area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This entire area is flat, and includes over half of the Panamint Valley saltpan. Along the eastern edge of the saltpan, a series of dunes and hillocks have developed and are the only vertical rises in the area. Vegetation varies from the western side, where Creosote Bush is dominant, along with Desert Holly and Desert Trumpet, to the eastern side with Saltbush and Shadscale Scrub, Iodine Bush, Seep Weed, and Salt Grass. Although no plant life grows on the saltpan itself, the eastern and northern rims support a good growth of large Mesquite trees, which have anchored the blowing sand in their roots, thus creating a small dune system. Fresh water marsh vegetation is found at Warm Sulfur Springs. The ruins of the Panamint City Stage Station are located on the eastern side of the saltpan, about two miles north of Ballarat, an occupied old mining town.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area remains in essentially natural condition, except for a few primitive ways, quite a few off-road vehicle tracks across the saltpan, and northern and Warm Sulfur Springs areas which have been fenced.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

There are no outstanding opportunities for solitude due to the open flatness of the land and the lack of vegetational screening. Primitive and unconfined recreation is also nonexistent due to openness and sparse vegetation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most public comments favored the inclusion of this roadless area for wilderness study as part of the Panamint Valley or as an extension of Death Valley National Monument.

AREA 142

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area includes portions of the Slate Mountains and Panamint Mountains and is located northeast of the town of Trona. The northern boundary is an improved dirt road that leads from Highway 178 to the ghost town of Ballarat, where the boundary proceeds south along the east side of the Panamint Valley to Goler Wash then turns east up Goler Wash to the Death Valley National Monument. The boundary follows the monument border east then south to the U.S. Naval Weapons Center which is the southern boundary. The western boundary consists of Highway 178 and an improved road leading from it to the Naval Weapons Center.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is predominantly public land with approximately 5 random blocks, or 2 percent, non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The terrain of this area is diverse and includes the Slate and Panamint Mountains, which have large canyons and an associated bajada. The area also includes Panamint Valley and a large salt pan located just east of the Slate Range. The Slate and Panamint Mountains are varied in topography, having smooth and jagged ridges, sharp peaks, and flat mountain tops and shallow washes and steep canyons. The mountains are rocky and display a variety of colors from tan to red to gold. The associated bajada gently slopes south and east into Panamint Valley and is interlaced with very shallow washes. Panamint Valley is virtually flat, and is broken by a few shallow washes. The valley gently slopes to the south and contains a large salt pan in the eastern portion. The vegetation of this area is mostly found in the bajada and lower elevations of the mountains. It consists mainly of low desert shrub, with the dominant plant being Creosote Bush Scrub. There are also a few scattered cholla in the bajada.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The western section, from the Slate Mountains to the boundary, has been excluded from further wilderness study for the following reasons: (1) The northern part of this section has a currently active quarry which displays extensive bulldozing, and large land scars. There is a maintained, two-lane, dirt road leading to a telephone relay tower, and there is a maintained dirt road leading to a mine. All of these permanent improvements by man are easily seen in this section and detract from the naturalness of the area; (2) The southern part of this section is laced with roads and ways leading to abandoned and current mining activity. Both the abandoned and current mines display large, easily noticeable scars. The Trona Airport and zones of private land also exist in this area. The radio tower access road and the Bundy Canyon mining access roads have been excluded due to the purpose and the maintained character of the road. The remaining area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature. There are a few primitive ways in Panamint Valley, none of which detract from the naturalness of the area. That portion of the roadless area outside the potential Wilderness Study Area boundary lies between Highway 178 and the crest of the Slate Range south and west of VABM 3362.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area, with its diverse terrain of jagged peaks and steep canyons, sloping bajadas and the flat valley, offers outstanding opportunities for solitude because of the ability of the topography to screen visitors from one another. The diverse landform and pristine condition lends itself to outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. These opportunities are further enhanced by adjacent wilderness vaules in Death Valley National Monument.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments refer to roads and mining activity which, after further field check, were excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Area where appropriate.

AREA 143

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the north by the California/Nevada border; on the east by Highway 127; on the south by Highway 190; and, on the west, by Death Valley National Monument.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site includes approximately nine sections of non-public land, scattered throughout the area and accounting for over 5 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes the rugged and colorful southern extension of the Funeral Mountain, Pyramid Peak and the enclosed valley called Red Amphitheater. Also included are creosote covered bajadas and the northern portion of the Amargosa River. Interesting geologic formations along with steep sloping ridges and narrow canyons contrast with a large interior valley. Vegetation is sparse on the rocky mountain mass and in the interior valleys and washes. Stands of creosote are broken by linear concentrations of mesquite along the route of the Amargosa River. The area also contains a historical railroad grade and the site of the abandoned community of Scanlon. The area includes Bighorn Sheep habitat, and a historic railroad.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The portion of the roadless area where man's work is substantially unnoticeable includes the Funeral Mountains and bajadas north and south of the mountains. This portion of the area has retained its primeval character and influence. The eastern portion has been excluded from wilderness consideration. Active and inactive mines, tailings, prospects and roads penetrate much of this excluded portion. A large milling operation, as well as sites of past structures, a railroad, and a townsite, along with associated ways, also contribute to this portion being affected in such a way that man's work is substantially noticeable. This excluded portion parallels a primitive way and the old railroad grade in the south, and avoids patented active mine operations at Section 18 (T. 18 S., R. 49 E.), as well as the abandoned townsite of Scanlon.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are outstanding. Narrow, winding canyons, and large rugged peaks and ridges create solitude. Primitive types of recreation are enhanced by being adjacent to a proposed national monument wilderness area which encompasses the majority of the Funeral Mountains, a part of the Amargosa Range. These opportunities are further enhanced by adjacent wilderness values in Death Valley National Monument.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

One comment discussed areas that did not contain wilderness values pointing out agricultural development, dwellings, and other imprints of man. This portion of the area was never considered for further study. All other comments support the findings.

AREA 144

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular-shaped roadless area is bordered on the northeast by the California/Nevada border; on the south, by a maintained road between Death Valley Junction and Ash Meadows; and, on the west, by Highway 127.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Public lands predominate, with only one centrally-located section of non-public inholding.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area consists of a flat, open, creosote-covered bajada and valley floor with little topographic relief.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature. Some fences and scars are found in the southern portion near Death Valley Junction.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Both topographic relief and vegetative screening are limited; thus, opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are restricted.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received referred to agricultural development and substantial imprints of man's work.

AREA 145

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the north by a dirt road to Ash Meadows; on the south-southeast, by Highway 178; on the east, by the California/Nevada border; and, on the west by Highway 127 and a telephone line maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 94 percent of the area is in public lands, with only a total of about 10 square miles of non-public lands scattered throughout.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes much of the Amargosa River Valley, the Resting Spring Range, and Eagle Mountain, a small mountain unit that rises steeply from the surrounding, flat terrain. Eagle Mountain juts abruptly from the surrounding Amargosa River Valley, standing in sharp topographic contrast to the surrounding area, with colorful bands of strata as a dominating feature. The Amargosa Valley comprises an alluvial plain that slopes downward to a dry lake bed just north of Eagle Mountain. It is sparsely vegetated with creosote and low, desert shrubs and bounded on the west by the Amargosa River. The Resting Spring Range varies in topography from smooth, low-rolling hills to extremely coarse, rugged rock formations with jagged peaks and deep canyons. In some locations, the rocks display a variety of colors ranging from subdued browns and tans to more intense pinks, reds, greens, and black.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The interior of the Resting Spring Range and the surrounding valleys are essentially pristine. Due to topographic variation, man's works, which include only a few primitive ways, are substantially unnoticeable. A small area at the very southern tip of the roadless area has been excluded from the area containing wilderness values because of a graded road to an active patented mine (Gershey Mine) and structures on the west slope of the Resting Spring Range and a telephone line road. A short road to a ranch and another to a mine enter the area from the north and have also been excluded. With these exceptions, the boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for seclusion are provided in the rugged mountains and in the valley areas. A wide range of primitive recreation experiences are available, from the intimacy of small enclosed areas in the mountains to the spaciousness of the valleys. The lack of encroaching man-made features adds to the unconfined character of the area.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

In terms of cultural history, the area contains several areas where prehistoric artifacts have been found. Five golden eagle and two prairie falcon nesting sites are known to exist in the area. In terms of vegetation, three rare, endangered or threatened species of forbs occur.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments refer to potential mineral areas with some references to specific sites already being utilized through exploratory work. These were field-checked and are reflected on the map where appropriate. Another large number of comments supported the findings.

AREA 146

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This small, elongated area is bordered on the west by Highway 127; on the east, by a power line corridor right-of-way and access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists primarily of public land, with approximately three-quarters of a square mile in the northern portion being non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area consists of relatively flat and sparsely vegetated creosote-covered valley land and bajada.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man's work is substantially unnoticeable within this area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are restrictive due to the flat topographic relief and sparse vegetation and the limiting size and conformity which does not provide for unconfined freedom of movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received agreed with the findings.

AREA 147

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the north by Highway 190; to the south, by Highway 178; to the east, by Highway 127; and, to the west, by a graded dirt road through Greenwater Valley.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists primarily of public land. Non-public lands are scattered throughout, accounting for approximately 6 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Roughly 12 miles across at its widest point and 32 miles long, this area encompasses approximately 300 square miles. Terrain varies considerably, ranging from smooth, flat valleys and bajadas to coarse, jagged mountains. Two major drainages divide the site into thirds. Through Greenwater Canyon the waters have carved a narrow passage through volcanic rock leaving steep sides and a twisting course. At Deadman Pass the erosion has produced a wide interspace with gently sloping sides. Although the valleys are densely vegetated, the mountains and slopes tend to support only sparse growth. Creosote is the dominant plant in the area, although numerous, less conspicuous, species abound, including desert holly, sage brush, prickly pear, cholla and bunch and annual grasses.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The northern boundary has been adjusted to exclude areas where man's impact has degraded the natural character. The exclusion includes active, abandoned mining operations, patented mining at Section 21, 29, 31, - 33, (T. 25 N., R. 4 E.), a graded road, and a network of unimproved ways. The graded road leads east from Death Valley Junction past the remains of the abandoned Lila C Mine (site of Old Ryan - now only tunnels, slag piles, and rusting equipment remain) to an area laced with old roads and mining claims at the mouth of Greenwater Canyon. A grid-like network of unimproved ways is located in the vicinity of the Lila C mine. At the site of the New Ryan, on the northern tip of the Greenwater Range, active and abandoned mining operations occur side-by-side. Tunnels, slag piles, and road scars exist here as well as many of the old structures that were once inhabited by the population of Ryan. The remainder of the roadless area generally retains its primeval character and appears affected primarily by the forces of nature. Man's works, which include a few abandoned mine shafts and primitive ways, are substantially unnoticeable due to screening by terrain diversity and fairly dense vegetation.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Terrain and vegetative variety provide many areas and spaces where a sense of isolation and seclusion are readily available. A relative lack of internal man-made features allows freedom of unconfined movement throughout the site. In terms of primitive recreation, the area offers both challenge and diversity. The Greenwater Range area is bounded to the east and west by large areas that are also relatively pristine, adding to the opportunities for a quality primitive experience. These opportunities are further enhanced by the location of the site adjacent to existing wilderness values in Death Valley National Monument.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

The area supports four raptor nesting sites including red-tailed hawks, common ravens and great horned owls. The Greenwater Range is transited by Bighorn Sheep. The area includes many cultural sites from prehistoric Indian habitation.

VII. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several comments referred to man-made improvements and permanent scars from active and abandoned mining operations. These areas were deleted where appropriate. The Deadman Pass Road shows no sign of maintenance for many years. Other comments indicated too much area had been deleted and that rehabilitation potential was not considered.

AREA 148

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is irregular in shape due to its location adjacent to Death Valley National Monument. Boundaries include a dirt road through Greenwater Valley to the east; Highway 178 to the south; and, the Death Valley National Monument to the west.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists almost entirely of public land. Only a few sections of non-public land occur within the roadless area, accounting for approximately 5 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is dominated by the relatively gently sloping expanse of Greenwater Valley. To the south, the gentle, eastern slopes of the Black Mountains enter the area. Vegetation is lush and dense on the valley floor, but thins rapidly as it rises on the steeper mountain slopes. Creosote is the dominant plant, supported by sagebrush, annual and bunch grasses, seasonal wildflowers and scattered cholla cactus.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

With the exception of a few primitive ways running through the roadless area, old mine sites, and scattered historic artifacts around the old mining town site of Greenwater, the area has remained in a natural state. Man's works are substantially unnoticeable due to the screening effects of the fairly dense vegetation. The area appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The relatively lush vegetation visually screens visitors from one another. Also, the lack of encroaching man-made features allows freedom of movement throughout the area. Its location adjacent to adminstratively-endorsed wilderness areas in Death Valley National Monument and to the relatively pristine Greenwater Range further enhances opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments noted the presence of old mining scars and activity as well as several jeep roads. An on the ground visit led to the conclusion that impacts did not have a significant influence on the natural values of the area.

AREA 149

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the north by Highway 178; on the east by Highway 127; on the south by a maintained dirt road and the Death Valley National Monument; and, on the west, by the Death Valley National Monument.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site includes approximately eight sections of non-public land scattered throughout the area and accounting for approximately 7 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Physical features in the area have a general north-south orientation along the east side of Death Valley National Monument. The dominant features are the Ibex Hills and Black Mountains. Through the horizontal rock layers the colors of brown, bright yellow, red, and black produce a unique scenic effect. Peaks along these two mountain systems range between 3000 feet and 4752 feet on Ibex Peak. Greenwater Valley, just northeast of the mountain slopes, is two to four miles wide and six to eight miles long and supports a good Creosote Bush Scrub plant community. Good views of the unique coloration of the adjacent Ibex Hills can be seen from the valley. In the northeastern corner are the Dublin Hills, forming a backdrop for the town of Shoshone.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man's works dominate the landscape along the east side of the area. In the northern half a band of influence two to three miles wide exists and, in the southern half, it increases to four to six miles. In the area east of the Dublin Hills, at the northern end of the roadless area, surface rock on several hills has been scraped away, presumably for use as decorative stone. A dwelling and several small mining prospects are also present. Private development associated with the town of Shoshone is evident. Just east of the southern end of the Dublin Hills random bulldozer scars severely detract from the primeval character of the land. Five miles south of Shoshone a maintained dirt road penetrates one mile into the roadless area for access to microwave relay facility. Though considerably less improved, this road continues beyond the microwave site into Greenwater Valley where maintenance apparently ends. Within the first two miles beyond the microwave site, numerous assessment holes dot the landscape. A wooden pole utility line enters the area near the microwave site and runs approximately one mile inside the eastern border. Approximately four miles further south from the microwave site a well maintained gravel road and paralleling utility line run west five miles to two large, highly visible, talc mines located midway up the east side of the Ibex Hills. The white tailings are substantially noticeable from the east side of the roadless area. A patented mining claim is excluded south of Confidence Wash. Scattered small scale abandoned mines and apparently unmaintained access routes are occasionally noticeable; however, the degree of impacts of these developments upon the natural landscape is relatively unnoticeable. These developments do not significantly affect the primeval character of the landscape.

The potential Wilderness Study Area boundary encompasses a large block of undeveloped Federal land which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The area boundaries are common with the roadless area boundaries west of a line of the following descriptions beginning at BM 2182, 10 miles east of Death Valley National Monument along Highway 178. The boundary leaves the highway to VABM 3044 at the north end of the Dublin Hills and follows the crest of these hills south to the center of section 14 (T. 21 N., R. 6 E.). The boundary then swings southwest across Greenwater Valley up a large wash to Ibex Peak where it follows the ridgeline of the Ibex Hills south to the Death Valley National Monument boundary. This potential Wilderness Study Area boundary excludes areas where the imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The scenic openness of Greenwater Valley, which is enclosed between the Dublin Hills and Ibex Hills, and the long washes through the Ibex Hills and Black Mountains offer seclusion in the broad unimpacted vistas and topographic isolation, thus providing outstanding opportunities for solitude. The size and diversity offer outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. These opportunities are further enhanced because the area is located adjacent to an administratively-endorsed wilderness area in Death Valley National Monument.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments included recognition of the wilderness qualities and the presence of mining areas. Mining areas noted in the comments have been excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Area boundaries.

AREA 149A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This roadless area is bordered on the east by a wood pole utility line right-of-way paralleling Highway 127; on the south by a maintained dirt road to the Ibex Springs Area; on the west by Death Valley National Monument; on the north by a maintained road to the Giant Mine and radio tower road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is entirely public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area contains hills in the majority of the area, ranging in elevation from 1210 feet up to 2180 feet. Creosote-covered bajadas can be seen in the southeastern and northern portions.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude due to primitive character, the adjacent Death Valley National Monument administratively-endorsed wilderness area and topographical variation which screen visitors from one another. These availabilites also provide many outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments stated that the area met the Wilderness Act criteria and should be designated for further wilderness study. Rechecks in the field supported this view.

AREA 150

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the north by Highway 178; on the west, by Highway 127; on the south, by the Tecopa Hot Springs cutoff and the Old Spanish Trail Highway; and, on the east, by the California/Nevada border.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is predominately public lands with approximately 10 percent of non-public lands in random sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is dominated by the southern portion of the Resting Springs Range, Chicago Valley, and the north-central portion of the Nopah Range. Both ranges are rugged and folded. Yellow, red, and brown color striations occur throughout the upper elevations of the Nopah Range. Grayish brown bajadas surround the mountains and appear as a low moderate slope. The Chicago Valley is predominately flat, with many winding light colored washes throughout its lower drainage. The vegetative cover is varied, but sparse. The mountains appear barren, with a few dwarfed creosote and other desert shrub and grass species. The surrounding bajadas and valley have more vegetative cover, which is basically composed of creosote, cacti, yucca, and other desert shrub species. In the lower wash drainage of Chicago Valley, the high water table affords other desert shrub species, such as desert willow, mesquite, and catclaw species. The lower drainage vegetation appears dark green in contrast to the surrounding light gray-green vegetation on the surrounding bajadas and the sparse barren appearance of the mountains.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has retained its primeval character and generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The few man-made developments that do exist, such as the houses and roads along the northern border in Chicago Valley (in sections 23, 24, 25, 36 T. 22 N., R. 7 E.), and the roads and ways affecting the general natural condition of the landscape at the southern end of the Resting Spring Range east of Tecopa Hot Springs (all of sections 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 35, 36, T. 21 N. R 7 E.; sections 2, 3, T. 20 N. R. 7 E; portions of sections 23, 25, 30, 31, 32, T. 21 N. R. 8 E.; portions of section 1, T. 20 N., R. 7 E.), have been excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Area. The western boundary of the potential Wilderness Study Area runs north from Tecopa Hot Springs through a wash in sections 28, 21, 20, 17 (T. 21 N., R. 7 E.) joining the way to Chappa Spring in section 8 and continuing north to Highway 178.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude as the variation in topography screens potential visitors from works of man. The rugged folded topography of the mountains provides isolated and secluded canyons where outstanding opportunities for solitude can be found. The Chicago Valley is isolated from outside influences, also contributing to outstanding opportunities for solitude. This area also contains outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments on file addressed the mineral potential of the area. Others agreed with the findings in the narrative.

AREA 150A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the north by the Old Spanish Trail Highway; on the west and south by Tecopa Springs Pass, Highway 127; and, on the east, by the well-maintained Mesquite Valley Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is predominately public lands with approximately 2 percent in random blocks of non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The dominating feature of this area is the southern portion of the Nopah Range. The range is rugged and folded with color striations throughout. The western bajada and valley of the Nopah Range is a moderately low rolling slope that appears light gray brown, becoming lighter toward the valley floor. The vegetation varies with terrain and elevation. The mountain vegetation is very sparse, consisting of creosote and a few other desert shrub and grass species. The western bajada and valley of this range are also sparsely vegetated with predominately light green creosote, cacti, and other desert shrub and grass species. The valley drainage is dominated by dark green mesquite and catclaw species.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has retained its primeval condition and generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The natural area appears to be used for grazing stock. The substantially noticeable works of man in the southern portion of the area have been excluded from further wilderness consideration. This is due to the extensive, active, open pit mining in the area. The southern boundary is now a line running from east to west over the mountain ridges excluding the patented Gunsight mining claim at Section 9 (T. 20 N., R. 8 E.). The mountain screens the natural area from the extensive mining activity to the south.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude. The variation in mountain topography substantially screens any outside influences and includes isolated and secluded canyons. The western bajada and valley also contain features that provide for outstanding opportunities for solitude, due to the vast distances, isolated washes, and vegetatives types that substantially screen users from one another. The area contains outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The rugged mountains provide excellent opportunities for unconfined freedom of movement. The western valley and bajada also provide outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation due to the vast distances, unique surrounding terrain, and vistas.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received referred to mineral potential and also detailed the wilderness qualities present.

AREA 151

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This small, triangular area is located east of the Nopah Range; bounded on the west by a maintained dirt road; on the north and east by the California/Nevada border; and, on the south, by the Old Spanish Trails Highway.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is generally public land with approximately 10 percent in random blocks of non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The terrain is predominately a flat portion of Pahrump Valley. The vegetation is primarily composed of creosote, mixed desert shrub, and grass species.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has not retained its primeval character, but contains several sections of private land which are scarred with an extensive grid pattern of roads for prospective housing developments and agricultural activities. These developments are substantially noticeable, thereby excluding the area from further wilderness consideration.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area does not possess outstanding opportunities for solitude and unconfined or primitive type of recreation. Extensive private developments are highly visible from anywhere within the area and severely inhibit any opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments agreed with recommendation.

AREA 154

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The eastern boundary is the California/Nevada State border. The southern boundary is a combination of: the Kingston Road, from the border southwest to Bench Mark 2575; a dirt road west to Bench Mark 2614; a graded dirt road west to the Excelsior Mine Road; the Excelsior Mine Road to the eastern access to the Pioneer Mine; the Pioneer Mine access roads and the continuation of the Excelsior Mine Road west to Horse Thief Springs; and a graded dirt road north, including a water line and tank maintenance road, and west to Bench Mark 2234. The western boundary is a combination of the Mesquite Valley road and the Old Spanish Trail Highway. The northern boundary is a combination of the graded dirt roads bordering the Pahrump Valley land developments and the Old Spanish Trails Highway.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is predominantly public land with approximately 20 percent in random blocks of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes a northern portion of the Kingston Range, and portions of California Valley, Mesquite Valley, and Pahrump Valley. The Kingston Range is rugged, with many canyons. The east and north-facing bajadas of the Range are moderate slopes, with many winding washes. Vegetation is composed of grasses, yucca, cacti, Joshua Trees, and mixed desert shrub species. The valleys are predominantly desert shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man's influence is substantially noticeable within many portions of this roadless area. The northern portion surrounds the land development in Pahrump Valley. This area also includes the Old Fraction Road Jeep Trail and other roads and ways. The northwestern area possesses many old mines and associated ways. The southern portions of the area include a landing strip, a watering tank and maintenance road, extensive talc mining operations at Blackwater, Pioneer, Excelsior, and the Snow White mines with associated roads and a primitive road to the patented Jupiter Mine. The southeast and eastern portions of the area, contain agricultural developments in Mesquite Valley. The interior sections of this roadless area are affected primarily by the forces of nature with man's work substantially unnoticeable. This natural area is defined by: the Old Traction Road Jeep Trail on the north and east, from the northeast corner of Section 27, (T. 21 S., R. 10 E.), south to the Jupiter Mine Road; the Jupiter Mine Road west to the southeast corner of Section 30, (T. 20 N., R. 11 E.); a straight line due west of the northeast corner of Section 30, to the graded dirt road north of Horse Thief Springs; the roadless area boundary to the northeast quarter of Section 8, (T. 20 N., R. 10 E.); then, northeast along a wash to the beginning at the Old Traction Road Jeep Trail, Section 27, (T. 21 S., R. 10 E.). A jeep trail in a wash enters the area from the south for two miles to a few old abandoned prospects but has no significant effect upon the naturalness of this large natural area. The southern end of the area contains patented mining claims, does not meet the Wilderness Act criteria, and is therefore, excluded from further wilderness consideration.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to winding washes and the rugged topography, the interior area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation despite the peripheral improvements.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of comments supported the findings that portions of the area had been unaffected by permanent improvements.

AREA 154A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north, west, and east by a maintained dirt road enclosing a portion of the northern Kingston Mountains and on the south by a blacktop road connecting Tecopa and Excelsior Mine Roads.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is predominately public land with approximately 5 percent in random blocks of non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This northern portion of the Kingston Mountains is very rugged and folded, with several canyons. The western portion of the area is a flat low bajada, sloping into the California Valley. The vegetation is sparse throughout the mountains, with creosote, yucca, and other mixed desert shrub and grass species. The light gray-green bajada is vegetated with creosote, yucca, cacti, and other mixed desert species.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Extensive mining activities have severely affected the area's natural condition. Access roads, open pit mines, and diggings are found throughout the mountains. The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited. Extensive mining activities and inability to substantially screen these developments severely inhibit any opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received supported designation of the area for further wilderness study; however, further field examination yielded no changes in the findings.

AREA 156

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the north and east by Death Valley National Monument; to the south and west by Fort Irwin Military Base; and, to the southeast, by a portion of the radio relay tower access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 94 percent public lands. Non-public sections occur at the rate of two sections per township throughout.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is characterized by rugged mountains which border two interior valleys, each valley containing a dry lake. The mountains take the form of three north-south trending ranges that converge to the north of the roadless area. The ranges to the east and west appear metamorphic in nature, while the middle range shows a volcanic influence. Bajadas are heavily vegetated with creosote; however, the vegetation thins out higher on the slopes and in the mountains. The dry lake beds are devoid of vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is largely undisturbed by man and affected primarily by the forces of nature. Only a few man-made developments exist within the area. These include the abandoned New Deal and Black Magic Mines. A few old structures, roads, and mine shafts remain at the sites all of which have been excluded from further wilderness consideration. These have only local impact due to screening by topographic barriers in the mountains. The microwave repeater and its access road also penetrate the area, but these features do not noticeably detract from the primeval character of the land due to its large size and diversity of landforms. On either side of the access road, beyond the old mill site at Owl Springs, the area is entirely in a pristine state.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Diversity of landforms and large size combine to create areas of isolation and seclusion, both in the mountains and in the valleys. The area allows freedom of unconfined movement. The adjacent administratively-endorsed wilderness areas in Death Valley National Monument and the unconfined character of the landscape further enhance these opportunities.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments expressed motorized recreational interest in the area for camping and rockhounding. Other comments supported the findings. No changes were made as a direct result of comment.

AREA 157

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is the Tunawee Canyon and the southern boundary of the Inyo National Forest. The eastern boundary is the Los Angeles Aqueduct western maintenance road. The southern boundary is Nine Mile Canyon Road and the western boundary is the boundary of the California Desert Conservation Area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

All this area is public land except for relatively small parcels along the mid-eastern boundary.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area adjoins the eastern portion of the Sierra Nevada. Topography includes valleys, canyons, alluvial fans, and steep hills that lead to the rugged granite mountains. The valleys vary from relatively flat, to rolling mounds and gullies within the canyons. There are quite a few winding canyons that lead to the mountains. The major canyons include: Portuguese, Sacator, Little Lake, Five Mile, Deadfoot, and Nine Mile. The hills above the canyon floors are generally very steep and rocky in texture. The vegetation is diversified. To the north, the valleys consist mostly of creosote, which ranges in height to over two feet. Further south, the creosote stands are more diversified as topography changes. There are some Joshua trees, Eriogonum, and desert shrub. The southern valleys are narrow, and mainly consist of low growing desert shrub with scattered portions of creosote. The vegetation within some of the canyons includes Joshua trees, creosote, desert shrub, cottonwood trees, annual grasses, and some cacti. The steep hills accommodate desert shrub, grasses, and some creosote. The higher elevations contain scattered portions of pinyon pine and some pine trees in the north. Eastward and further south, the vegetation is restricted mostly to grass and a few desert shrub because of the rocky structure of the mountains.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area consists of undeveloped public land retaining its primeval character and influence. The imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable within the majority of this area. Those portions where the imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable have been excluded from the potential wilderness study area. Portuguese Canyon Road is used by the permanent residents in the canyon. An extension of this road leads further west, for water pipeline maintenance. There are two other water pipeline maintenance roads west of Red Hill just off the Los Angeles Aqueduct western maintenance road. There is also a ranch northwest of Coso Junction that contains cattle fences, ways leading from ranch headquarters and a few areas of old mining activity. The ways seriously detract from the naturalness of the ranch area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude can be obtained because of size, the rugged topography and high, winding canyons which help to create an atmosphere of solitude. The vegetation at the higher elevations also provides a buffer zone between visitors. Primitive and unconfined types of recreation are accommodated because of the vegetative screening and diverse topography.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A variety of comments reflected the overall natural condition and primitive recreation opportunities as well as the presence of roads and ways. Further field examination yielded no changes in the findings.

AREA 157A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is a utility transmission maintenance road. The eastern boundary is a combination of the utility transmission maintenance road, a railroad, and the Los Angeles Aqueduct maintenance road which is furthest to the west. The southern boundary is the Talus Canyon pipeline maintenance road and the western boundary is the Inyo National Forest.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains less than 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments were split between those supporting and those objecting to wilderness consideration for the area. When the U. S. Forest Service eliminated adjacent lands in the Inyo National Forest from RARE II designation, this small area was dropped from further wilderness consideration.

AREA 157B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is the Talus Canyon pipeline maintenance road; the eastern, the Southern Pacific railroad line; the southern, Tunawee Canyon Road; and, the western, the Inyo National Forest.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received challenged wilderness study designation due to the small size of the area. The area was dropped from further consideration when adjacent lands in the Inyo National Forest were eliminated from RARE II consideration by the U. S. Forest Service.

AREA 158

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is Nine-Mile Canyon Road; the eastern boundary, the Los Angeles Aqueduct maintenance road; the southern boundary, Highway 178; the western boundary, the California Desert Conservation Area boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 10-15 percent of this area is non-public land, located in the middle and southern portions. The remainder is public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography ranges from the valley floor to the eastern portion of the Sierra Nevada including Owens Peak (elevation 8475), and Morris Peak (elevation 7208). The valleys are diversified; some relatively open and flat; some are surrounded by steep mountains. Steep mountains in the western portion are diversified with canyons that wind up the eastern Sierra. Vegetation is varied: creosote, associated desert shrub, and scattered portions of yuccas in the valleys and bajadas. Further up the canyons, scattered yucca, cacti, desert shrub, annuals and cottonwood trees are found. Vegetation at the higher elevations is generally sparse; there are portions where only annual plants grow. There are other portions where scattered and thick stands of pinyon pines cover the mountainsides and crests.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The majority of this area is undeveloped land that has retained its primeval character. There are also portions of this area where man and his works are substantially noticeable. A portion of the road up Sand Canyon has been excluded due to the maintained character of the road. The ways that branch off the main road back up Sand Canyon are not maintained; do not substantially affect the naturalness of this area; and, can be reclaimed by natural forces. The Indian Wells Canyon road has been excluded due to the maintained character of the road. The several mines and branch roads along the Indian Wells Canyon Road have also been excluded due to the maintained nature of the access roads, the apparent active mining in the form of open shafts, slag piles, various machinery, and locked gate. Even though these active mining sites do exist they are predominately screened by the varied topography and are substantially unnoticeable. Other ways along the lower accessible slopes have been excluded as well.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are found in this area. The diverse terrain which includes high winding canyons and the dense pinyon pine forest provide excellent screening between visitors. Primitive types of recreation can be found because of the varied topography and vegetation which would allow diverse types of recreation and unconfined movement. The Pacific Crest Trail also passes through this area, near its western boundary.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The large number of comments received were mostly in favor of giving the area further wilderness study due to outstanding flora and fauna and rugged terrain; others referred to imprints of man. The latter portions were excluded where appropriate.

AREA 159

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is Highway 178; the eastern boundary, the Los Angeles Aqueduct maintenance road; the southern boundary, Sage Canyon Road; and, the western boundary, the Sequoia National Forest RARE II Area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 10-15 percent of this area is non-public land, located in the western and northern portions, with a few non-public parcels scattered in the mid-portion.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The terrain is composed of the steep mountains of the eastern Sierra Nevada and their interface with the high desert. These mountain ridges flank deep intervening canyons along the northern and southern borders and a large canyon to Cow Heaven in the center. The canyon floors contain dense clusters of Joshua Trees, low desert shrubs, and cactus. The steep, sandy mountain slopes are sparsely vegetated with mixed desert shrubs. The ridgetops are covered with stands of Pinyon and Juniper trees. Elevations range from 3400 feet on the desert floor to 6700 feet on the highest ridgetop.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A major portion of the roadless area is affected primarily by the forces of nature. Lower slopes where off-road vehicles have easy access have been excluded, along with the maintained road into Cow Heaven where stock watering ponds and other range improvements are noticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation are available. The deep, winding canyons and adjacent Sequoia National Forest RARE II Area further enhance these opportunities.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments detailed ways, trails and permanent improvements. The adjacent RARE II Area was pointed out as well. Areas impacted by off-road vehicle use to such an extent that natural values have been lost have been deleted.

AREA 159A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area of the southern Sierra is bounded on the north by Sage Canyon; on the west, by the Sequoia National Forest RARE II area; on the south, by Horse Canyon Road; on the east, by a road from Horse Canyon Road to Sage Canyon.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 10-15 percent of this area is non-public land in random blocks along the northern border.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The terrain consists of a mountain ridge of the Sierra Nevada descending to the desert floor to the east and bounded by deep heavily vegetated canyons to the north and south. The canyons contain dense clumps of Joshua Trees and desert shrubs. The mountain ridge contains peaks to 6000 feet and supports a pinyon-juniper woodland.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The integrity of the area has suffered from the use of off-road vehicles. Trails criss-cross the lower slopes and climb to many of the higher elevations. These scars are substantially noticeable throughout virtually the entire roadless area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The vegetation and topography of the area and its continuity with the southern Sierra Nevada provide for outstanding opportuinites for solitude. Primitive and unconfined types of recreation are somewhat limited by the numerous off-road vehicle trails.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments referred to the presence of off-road vehicle trails within the area.

AREA 160

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is Horse Canyon Road; the eastern boundary, the Los Angeles Aqueduct maintenance road; the southern boundary, Bird Spring Canyon Road; and, the northwestern boundary, the Sequoia National Forest RARE II Area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Only one to two percent of this area is non-public land, located near the mid-western boundary.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The site is in the southern Sierra Nevada and consists of a mountain ridge between two major canyons. The eastern portion is a desert bajada where elevations range from 3400 feet to 3800 feet and support a Cresote Bush Scrub plant community. The long deep canyons climb to 5000 feet and support dense clusters of Joshua Trees and various low desert shrub species. The line of peaks on the ridge attain elevations to 6800 feet and support stands of Pinyon and Juniper Trees. Intervening slopes are covered with desert shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This scenic area contains impacts from man's presence over the lower elevations where access by off-road vehicles is available. Jeep and motorcycle trails are apparent over many of these sparsely vegetated areas. Cattle grazing occurs in Horse Canyon and there is a developed water source within the canyon. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area encompass those steeper mountainous areas where off-road vehicle tracks and other improvements do not occur.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The diverse terrain of the area and the adjacent Sequoia National Forest RARE II Area on the west provide a wide range of ecosystems from high desert to Pinyon-Juniper. Topographic and vegetative screening, teamed with the continuous physiographic features of the Sierra Nevada, lend to the visitor outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The Pacific Crest Trail passes through the area between Bird Springs Pass Road and the Scodie Mountains.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments point out the presence of a microwave tower and many trails. These impacted areas have been deleted. Several comments refer to the portion which retains its natural condition.

AREA 160A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is the Piute Mountain Road; the eastern boundary, the Kelso Valley Road; the southern boundary, the Jawbone Canyon Road; and, the western boundary, the Sequoia National Forest.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land and is not of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The two comments received were not pertinent to the inventory criteria.

AREA 160B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is the California Desert Conservation Area boundary. The eastern boundary is the Kelso Valley Road. The southern boundary is Piute Mountain Road. The Sequoia National Forest defines the western border.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 25-35 percent of this area is non-public land, located in the eastern and northern portions.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The roadless area encompasses Kelso Peak and associated drainages to the north, south, and east. To the west the Kelso Mountain system is continuous with the Piute Mountain range in Sequoia National Forest. The upper slopes of Kelso Peak are dotted with Pinyon and Juniper trees. Intervening slopes are brushy with large granite rock outcroppings. The boulder strewn valleys support dense stands of Joshua Trees. Elevations in the roadless area range from 3300 feet in the far northwestern corner to 5090 feet at Kelso Peak.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Several portions of the area display evidence of man's works. The eastern portion, just west of Kelso Valley Road contains homes, ranches, and a network of roads that extend from these man-made improvements to penetrate the eastern slopes and valleys. Several off-road vehicle ways in the southern portion have also degraded the natural condition of the landscape. The remaining portion of the area is in a natural condition and appears to retain its primeval character. The boundary of the potential Wilderness Study Area begins at approximately 5600 feet in the southwestern corner and follows the mountain valley interface excluding houses and improvements in the valley areas descending to 3500 feet in the northwestern corner.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The mountainous portion provides a diversity of terrain with outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Solitude is enhanced by the adjacent RARE II Area in the Sequoia National Forest and the remote location of this roadless area. In the valley portion, human habitation and numerous improvements limit opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The comments received support the findings.

AREA 160C

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is a combination of the California Desert Conservation Area boundary and the Sequoia National Forest RARE II Area. The eastern boundary is the Sequoia National Forest RARE II Area. The southern boundary is the Bird Springs Canyon Road. The western boundary is the Kelso Valley Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 95 percent of the area is public lands with a small parcel of non-public land located on the extreme western edge.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Steep mountain sides dominate the area with elevations of 3500 feet to 5200 feet. Vegetation in the lower elevations includes creosote, yucca, cholla, desert shrub and some Joshua trees. Upper elevations contain scattered desert shrub and some juniper in the eastern section.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The absence of permanent improvements or human habitation helps the area retain its primeval character.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area adjoins the Sequoia National Forest RARE II Area on the south and Area 160 on the west which also adjoins the RARE II Area. Outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation could only be obtained if the adjoining RARE II areas are considered.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Very few comments were received, and the majority of comments stated that this area was under 5000 acres in size. However, this unit is adjacent to a U.S. Forest Service RARE II Area.

AREA 161

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western boundary is the Los Angeles Aqueduct maintenance road. The northern boundary is the dirt road that runs west out of Armistead up to Cow Heaven Canyon. The eastern boundary is a graded dirt road that runs parallel to, and approximately two miles west of, U.S. 395. The southern boundary is a dirt road from U.S. 395 to the Los Angeles Aqueduct maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 5 percent of this area is non-public land, located in the southeast corner.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is primarily flat with very little topographical relief. It is very narrow and sparsely vegetated with creosote and other low-growing desert shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Except for the privately-owned land that contains a residence, the remaining portion consists of undeveloped public land that generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of the relatively small size of this roadless area, in conjunction with the flatness of the terrain and sparse vegetation, the ability of this area to screen visitors from one another is greatly restricted; thus, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are lacking.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received agree the roadless area does not possess wilderness values.

AREA 162

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western boundary is a graded road 2 miles west of U.S. 395; the northern boundary is the dirt road that runs west out of Armistead to Cow Heaven Canyon; the eastern boundary is U.S. 395; the southern boundary is a dirt road from U.S. 395 to the Los Angeles Aqueduct maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 5 percent of this area is non-public lands, located in the southwest corner and on the middle west side.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is primarily flat with very little topographical relief. It is very narrow and sparsely vegetated with creosote and other low growing desert shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of the relatively small size of this roadless area, in conjunction with the flatness of the terrain and sparse vegetation, the ability of this area to screen visitors from one another is greatly restricted; thus, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are lacking.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The comments received agree that wilderness values are not present.

AREA 163

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is Bird Spring Canyon Road; the eastern boundary, the Los Angeles Aqueduct Road; the western boundary, the Kelso Valley Road; and, the southern boundary, Dove Springs Canyon Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 10-15 percent of this area is non-public land, located in the northwestern and southwestern portions.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The site consists of an uplifted mountainous region which is continuous with mountains south of Dove Spring Road. The western, northern and eastern edges are valley areas. Dense clusters of Joshua Trees are the predominant vegetation of these valley areas. The mountain slopes are covered with sagebrush while the upper reaches have scattered stands of Pinyon and Juniper Trees. Elevations in the valleys range between 3500 feet and 4500 feet while elevations of the mountain area range to 6365 feet.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Certain regions of the roadless area contain improvements such as stock watering facilities, roads, and ways. Off-road vehicle activity has had significant effect in the Kelso Valley and in the eastern bajada which descends to Indian Wells Valley. A microwave tower with access road is located just south of Bird Spring Pass. A large portion of the mountain region is without significantly noticeable imprints of man's work and therefore retains its primeval character. This potential Wilderness Study Area boundary follows the mountain-valley interface along the 4000 feet contour line in

Kelso Valley. The southern boundary is Frog Creek Canyon. Along the northern and eastern boundaries the border generally follows the 4500 feet contour line to Bird Spring Pass where there is an exclusion for the microwave tower.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

In Kelso Valley numerous trails from off-road vehicle activity cut the area into small segments which restrict unconfined movement and solitude. The diversity of terrain and lack of imprints of man provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation in the mountainous portions of the area. The Pacific Crest Trail bisects the area from north to south.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received support findings and reflect the overall natural condition.

AREA 164

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western boundary is the Red Rock-Inyokern Road. The southern boundary from west to east is a maintained dirt road southwest to a water tank and further to a well at the north end of Bonanza Gulch. It proceeds eastward through the following points: Smith Mine, Colorado Camp, Apache Mine, Holland Camp, Mormon Flat, and Iron Canyon to Garlock Road. The eastern boundary is the existing right-of-way of a steel-structure powerline corridor. The northern boundary, at its western point, leaves the Red Rock-Inyokern Road proceeding southeast 3.4 miles to another apparently maintained road leading to a huge sandpit. From a point just south of the pit the northern border runs east to the eastern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 10-15 percent of this area is non-public land, concentrated in the northern portion, and randomly scattered throughout.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of this large mountain system is diverse. Situated along the Garlock Fault, a major east-west fault, the terrain consists of numerous reddish-colored buttes and dark uplifted mesas of volcanic origin. Intervening slopes have a golden color due to high production of annuals and are disected with many narrow canyons through a badlands topography. Elevations range from 5244 feet on Black Mountain to less than 2000 feet along the southern boundary in Fremont Valley. The primary plant community represented is the Cresote Bush Scrub, although the various exposures of the complex mountains provides a great variety in vegetation. The western side of the mountain contains many Joshua trees.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Approximately one-half of the roadless area has been identified as having wilderness characteristics. The remaining section is impacted by the presence of numerous heavily used and eroded jeep trails and several habitations and mines. These noticeable works of man occur in Bonanza Gulch, Last Chance Canyon, Mormon Flat, Mormon Gulch, Goler Gulch, Sand Gulch, Iron Canyon, and Goler Heights. The area between Iron Canyon and Mesquite Canyon is excluded due to the presence of numerous ways and a radio facility. In all of these areas man is not a visitor and his works are substantially noticeable scars upon the landscape. The entire roadless portion lying east of Sheep Spring has been excluded due to the numerous ways which provide access to almost any point in that section. In spite of the numerous works of man which dominate a portion of the roadless area, a vast section remains subject to the forces of nature and retains its primeval character. Works of man are not visible and the natural condition is intact within the defined boundaries of this potential Wilderness Study Area. These boundaries are common with the roadless area boundary between the Red Rock-Inyokern Road and Holland Camp and along the western border to section 27, (T. 27 S., R. 38 E.). The northern study area boundary leaves the Red Rock-Inyokern Road in section 27 and skirts the lava formation along a way to a point one-half mile south of the sandpit in section 32 with an exclusion of a road to a mine in section 36, (T. 27 S., R. 38 E.). The eastern boundary is along a way from the sandpit through Sheep Spring and Dull Pick Spring to Mormon Flat.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLTIUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Within the potential Wilderness Study Area boundaries the diverse landform and lack of imprints of men provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The various landforms provide outstanding opportunities for a variety of primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Within the excluded portions the numerous habitations reduce opportunities for solitude while primitive and unconfined movement is restricted by the numerous jeep trails which divide the area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of comments referred to roads and mining activity. These locations have been reflected in the final map.

AREA 165

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is the Randsburg Wash Road and streets and roads associated with the southeast corner of the city of Ridgecrest. The western boundary is U.S. 395 and China Lake Boulevard. The southern border is defined by a wood pole powerline road; the eastern boundary, by Trona Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

That portion of the area which lies within Kern County is in close proximity to the town of Ridgecrest and is almost entirely in non-public status. The remaining 50 percent of the area is public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of a series of relatively small but steep hills and adjacent alluvium associated with the southern end of Salt Wells Valley. Elevations range between 2300 feet and 3700 feet with the creosote scrub plant community being the only community represented.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Ways are scattered throughout the area as a portion of it is included within the Rademacher "open" area where off-road vehicle use is common. All of the hills within the area are heavily mined. A large portion in the western half contains many man-made improvements such as homes and streets. Primeval character of the land is not evident within the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude are offered among the hills in a small portion of the area. In general, the area lacks vegetative screening and is laced with ways from off-road vehicle use which restricts unconfined movement within the area. The opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are severely limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received agreed with the assessment.

AREA 165A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area's northern border is a wood-pole powerline maintenance road. To the west, the border is China Lake Boulevard and U.S. 395. To the east, the border is Trona Road and the Searles Station cutoff.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 90 percent public land. Non-public holdings occur only in scattered sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of a series of relatively small, steep hills and adjacent alluvium associated with the southern end of Salt Wells Valley. Creosote scrub is the only plant community represented. The hills are generally light to reddish-brown with vegetative density largely dependent upon slope.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area lies partially within an area designated as "open" to off-road vehicle use. As a result of random and organized use of this type, erosional scars and heavily used trails are readily apparent. In addition, the Rademacher Mining District is located within the borders. Mining operations of varying size are evident throughout the hills. Impacts of this type are substantially noticeable from any vantage point. A number of ways lace that portion of the alluvium south of Ridgecrest. The primeval character of the land is not evident as man's work appears to be the primary force affecting the landscape.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude are offered among the hills in a small portion of the area. In general, however, the lack of vegetative or topographic screening limits or negates opportunities for solitude. The area is laced with roads and ways which are access routes to mining activity and off-road vehicle routes. This general network severely reduces opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comment agreed with findings.

AREA 166

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular area is bordered on the south by Randsburg Wash Road; on the north, by Highway 178; and, on the east, by Trona Road and a short, maintained road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains one section of non-public land and is 86 percent public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This extremely flat, sparsely vegetated area lies along the southwestern end of Salt Wells Valley. The vegetation consists of scattered low desert shrubs dominated by creosote. From 2400 feet at the western end, the area slopes generally to the northeast to 1922 feet at the easternmost point.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The roadless area is largely unimpacted by man. No developments or permanent improvements are present. Some random off-road vehicle scarring is evident, but not substantially noticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area is of extremely uniform topography with low vegetative cover. These factors provide no screening from outside influences, such as the surrounding highways, the nearby city of Ridgecrest, or from other visitors. Opportunities for solitude are lacking. The uniform topography offers no diversity in recreational uses. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are severely limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments disagreed with this evaluation.

AREA 167

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The southern boundary is a two-lane paved road maintained by the U.S. Navy, which connects China Lake Naval Weapons Center with Mojave Range B. The northern and western boundaries are Highway 178, a powerline right-of-way, and Trona Road. The eastern boundary is the Trona Railroad.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Public lands comprise 95 percent of the area, with non-public holdings in less than two sections on the western and eastern boundaries.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The northern end of the Spangler Hills is composed mostly of decomposed granite, rises abruptly from Searles Valley, and shows terracing from recession of the ancient lake. The west side of the Spangler Hills is a more gradual slope and runs into an alluvial formation at the east end of Salt Wells Valley. The vegetation is typical high desert Creosote Bush Scrub.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The imprint of man's work is evident. Mining has occurred in hills near the southern boundary, in the center of the area and in several locations along the east face of the hills. A bird guzzler maintained by California Department of Fish and Game is located near the southern border but is well-screened by surrounding vegetation and location. A large quarry in the northern end of these hills is a substantially noticeable scar. Other impacts include many scars from random off-road vehicle use which are most apparent adjacent to the "open" area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

From certain vantage points within the area, vistas of the surrounding features, such as Searles Valley, the Argus Range, the Panamint and Slate Ranges, the Lava Mountains and Black Hills enhance opportunities for solitude. Several washes and canyons provide isolation and screening from other visitors. West of the mountains, screening is lacking. The evidence of human activiy in the form of mining impacts and numerous ways restrict unconfined movement as these are often encountered while moving through the area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments referred to mining impacts, motorized recreational interest, and high potential for primitive recreation. The area was dropped from further study as more information was received and validated.

AREA 168

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The roadless area is bordered on the east by the Mojave Range B of the China Lake Naval Weapons Center. The southern boundary is the Randsburg Wash Road. The west boundary is the Trona Railroad and Highway 178. The northern border consists of a maintained road to Trona Airport (which extends around the northeast side of Searles Lake to the Naval reservation boundary) and a cutoff road between it and Highway 178.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Only 10 percent of the area is non-public land. It is concentrated in the north-central portion of Searles Lake.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the large Searles Lake dry lake bed in the northern half and the lower Searles Valley in the southern half and is extremely flat with elevations ranging from 1600 feet to 2000 feet. Searles Lake is unvegetated, while the lower valley is sparsely vegetated with Shadscale and other alkali-resistant types. Near the western border, six miles south of the Westend Chemical Plant, tufa formations have created large pinnacles which are scattered for two miles into the Searles Valley and are registered National Natural Landmarks.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Primeval character and influence is not apparent in the area. The town of Trona lies along the western edge. Industrial development encumbers a vast area, along with large evaporation ponds and salt wells and large tank locations with necessary maintained roads. At the south end of Searles Lake, maintained dirt roads service a water well field. Both clandestine and authorized tufa removal have altered the natural condition of several of the pinnacles, while random off-road vehicle tracks scar many areas.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Except for the pinnacles, there are no physical features within this roadless area which serve to break the uniformity of the landscape. Vegetative screening is also nonexistent. Primitive and unconfined recreational potential is extremely limited. The area does not sufficiently meet the criteria to receive further wilderness consideration.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments related to inventory considerations indicated that the area had certain wilderness characteristics.

AREA 169

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the south by the Trona Railroad; on the north, by Randsburg Wash Road; and, on the west, by a pipeline road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The entire area is composed of public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area boundaries extend from an elevation of 2220 feet to 3569 feet and consist of steep slopes with several large dissecting washes. The hills are strewn with granite boulders. Creosote scrub dominates the entire area, where soil depth is sufficient to support a vegetative cover.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The forces of nature are no longer the dominant forces at work in this area. The primeval character and influence of the land are not apparent due to the heavy evidence of human activity. This area includes a designated open area for off-road vehicle use and is the scene of 20 to 30 motorcycle races per year, severely reducing the naturalness. There is no portion of the Spangler Hills that has not been severely impacted by this use. Through the center of the hills several large-scale abandoned mining operations are evident with substantially noticeable excavations. Along the western border a house and cafe are the center of off-road vehicle activity. The hills are virtually denuded for several square miles around the site.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The remoteness of the area and its expansive views of surrounding features provide outstanding opportunities for solitude; however, the extensive network of ways and trails in the area severely limits opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

All comments received were in agreement with findings.

AREA 170

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered to the north by the Randsburg Wash Road and the Trona Railroad. The eastern border is the U.S. Naval Weapons Center, Mojave Range. The southern boundary is Steam Well Road and a maintained dirt road extending further east to Blackwater Well. The western boundary is a pipeline road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 95 percent public lands. Non-public sections are isolated and scattered.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the Lava Mountains, Golden Valley, the Almond Mountains, the Summit Range, Teagle Wash, and the Spangler Hills. The Lava Mountains rise approximately 1700 feet from the desert floor to an elevation of 4985 feet with canyon walls of spectacular multicolored sedimentary types. Golden Valley is a rolling valley approximately eight miles long and two miles wide between the Lava Mountains and Almond Mountains. The Summit Range of sand hills supports a Joshua Tree Woodland and lies just north of the Lava Mountains. This range slopes northward into Teagle Wash where elevations range from 2800 feet along the western boundary to 2000 feet near the Randsburg Wash Road. Teagle Wash supports a Creosote Bush Scrub plant community.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The quality of the landscape is a direct reflection of use designations. Teagle Wash has been designated as an open area for vehicle use. Approximately 20 permits per year are issued for motorcycle racing. As a result of intensive organized competition, the area is extremely impacted. Vehicle tracks and a network of motorcycle trails blanket the valley, thus significantly altering the primeval character of the landscape. Summit Range was designated as "open to vehicle use on existing roads and trails only," as was the narrow corridor running south between Trona Road and the Lava Mountains, a favorite play area for motorcycles. Vehicle tracks run randomly over the hills in all directions, as do several heavily-used motorcycle trails. Erosion has occurred in many places, intensifying the impact upon the landscape. The flat area between Trona Road and the western side of the Lava Mountains is a corridor connecting areas of off-road-vechicle use in Teagle Wash and the Red Mountain/Cuddeback area. Again, intensive vehicle use has significantly altered the apparent naturalness of the land. The Lava Mountains have been closed to vehicle use and are mostly inaccessible to such use due to their extremely rugged nature. A few long abandoned mining impacts do occur in the Lava Mountains north of Stream Well. In contrast to Teagle Wash, where man and his own works dominate the landscape, these mountains are virtually undisturbed by man and retain primeval character. Golden Valley lies to the east of the Lava Mountains and carries a "designated roads and trails only" vehicle use designation. The area contains some random vehicle tracks as it is quite accessible by a dirt road which enters the valley from the south. Another visible impact in Golden Valley is a result of intensive sheep grazing. Sheep "trails" are visible throughout much of the valley and some damage to perennial vegetation has resulted. However, these impacts do not appear to be so intensive as to be irreversible or irretrievable. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area include the whole of the Lava Mountains, Golden Valley, and the Almond Mountains. The northern boundary is an unimproved way and a large canyon separating the Lava Mountains from the Summit Range. Beyond the Summit Range the boundary is the large motorcycle trail which skirts the northern end of the Lava Mountains. The eastern boundary is common with the roadless area boundary. The southern boundary is Steam Well Road and its extension to Blackwater Well with exclusions for old mining operations at Mountain Spring and Steam Well. The Golden Valley Road runs north from this boundary from the base of the Almond Mountains. The western boundary runs between 3200 feet and 3400 feet along the western edge of the Lava Mountains. This is a highly visible boundary where the slopes of the Lava Mountains meet the desert floor.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The Lava Mountains, with their deep and scenic interior canyons, provide seclusion and isolation from other visitors. Vistas include large features of adjacent areas. These expanses show little significant imprint of man at these distances and lend a psychological feeling of vastness. The rolling nature of Golden Valley provides ample screening, while its orientation between two mountain systems gives the visitor an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The lack of roads and ways and the general absence of evidence of man's work upon the landscape has left this portion undisturbed.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

An overwhelming number of comments contested the inclusion of a road in Golden Valley stating that it is, in fact, only a jeep trail. Most of the road was deleted so that it now provides access only as far as Section 15 for grazing purposes, but does not continue through the Valley. Many comments also expressed motorized recreational interest. No competetive off-road vehicle areas are included in this potential Wilderness Study Area. All portions have been previously identified in BLM planning processes for their natural values and managed as such.

AREA 171

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western border is formed by a combination of U.S. 395 and a railroad line, while the eastern edge is Trona Road. The northern border is a graded dirt road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately two sections of scattered non-public lands accounting for approximately nine percent of the land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Landform varies from flat to low rolling hills and includes a portion of the Summit Range. Major parts of the site are gently sloping bajadas broken only by shallow washes. Throughout the site the vegetative pattern is fairly uniform. Creosote dominates, supported by a variety of low desert shrubs and grasses.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The naturalness of the site has been destroyed by off-road vehicle use. Located in an "open" area, the site has been used extensively for both organized and random off-road vehicle activity. Impacts from these activities have reduced the naturalness to the point where it no longer meets wilderness criteria.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The rolling terrain provides screening and isolation from other visitors in the area thus enhancing opportunities for solitude. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are limited by numerous trails in the area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received support findings.

AREA 172

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on all sides by maintained dirt roads: To the west, a pipeline road generally paralleling U.S. 395; to the south, a graded two-lane dirt road connecting the mining town of Atolia with a mill site at Blackhawk Well; to the east, a dirt road between Blackhawk Well and the Brown's Ranch Road; and, to the north, Steam Well Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 94 percent public land. Non-public holdings consist of two separate blocks.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The roadless area includes Red Mountain and the associated bajadas and alluvium. Elevations range from 3500 feet at the southeast corner of the mountain to 5261 feet at the peak. The transition between bajada and valley occurs on the east side, where the valley slopes eastward to the Cuddeback drainage basin. The vegetation throughout is of the Creosote Bush Scrub plant community. Introduced grasses replace native cover in some areas as a result of overgrazing. Several rock outcrops provide nesting sites for Prairie Falcons. The Mojave Ground Squirrel, listed by the State of California as a rare species, is also found in the area. The Squaw Spring site has been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. It contains numerous house rings, metates, petroglyphs, and other highly visible evidence of aboriginal presence.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Mining occurs on the lower hills and slopes on all sides of Red Mountain. The most noticeable scar is a talc mine near Steam Well Road, with highly visible white tailings. Much of the northern bajada is taken up by mining claims, but few have been extensively worked. Several access ways penetrate the area, especially along Steam Well Road, where visitors are frequent. Another road on the north runs by the talc mine, two miles into the area to Squaw Spring, providing access to several mining claims on the northern bajada. At Squaw Spring are the remnants of an old water system. Large concrete foundations and a large concrete storage tank still remain and are of historical interest. Several access routes appear to be maintained solely by the passage of vehicles and do not meet the definition of a road. A utility line connects the mill site at Blackhawk Well with Atolia. A small building for an abandoned beacon site is located on top of Red Mountain. The area has received both organized and random use by off-road vehicles and motorcycles. Motorcycle trails are encountered on the lower slopes and in canyons on the northern and western sides of the mountain where terrain will allow. A jeep trail climbs the west side to a high saddle and is substantially noticeable. Other roads penetrate the west side to mining claims in the lower canyons. Other impacts along the west side include garbage dumps and junk cars from the nearby community of Red Mountain. The central portion of the roadless area, however, retains its primeval character and influence. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area include all of Sections 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, (T. 30 S. R. 41 E.); Section 33 (T. 29 S., R. 41 E.); portions of Sections 1, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, (T. 30 S., R. 41 E.); and, Sections 28, 32, 34, 35, 36 (T. 29 S., R. 41 E.). These sections include a rugged mountainous area where the integrity of the landscape is intact, with the forces of nature being the primary forces at work.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The canyons and hills allow penetration into the area and provide topographic screening from other visitors. Higher elevations afford outstanding views of surrounding features. These qualities provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The significant ongoing human activity from adjacent communities and the various impacts of man's work which are readily apparent over much of the westside of the mountain detract from the overall primitive recreation potential and these portions have been largely excluded from further wilderness consideration.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Over 50 comments have been received on this roadless area. About 75 percent of those comments recommended dropping the area from further wilderness study. Most cited ORV activities and mining activities on the slopes. Of those advocating further wilderness study the natural values of the higher areas and the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreational activities were cited. The area has been visited on the ground several times and flown over many times by the field team. As a consequence, most of the areas impacted by man's activities have been excluded from further wilderness study. However, the higher and steeper areas of the mountain show little sign of man's presence or use of the area and findings were not changed in those portions.

AREA 173

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular area is bordered on the northwest by the Twenty Mule Team Borax Trail; on the south by maintained dirt roads; and on the east, by the Naval Weapons Center Mojave Range B boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains 97 percent public land, with only one section of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The dominant physical feature is a lava mesa near the center, three miles long and one mile wide, oriented north-south with a flat top and steep sides of dark brown volcanic rock. Vegetation is limited to the bottom where reduced slope allows some soil to accumulate. East of the mesa is a gently sloping bajada which runs to the eastern border. Vegetation on this bajada is lush creosote scrub with dense desert shrubs throughout. West of the mesa are some low light-brown hills near Blackwater Well. This scrub vegetation, though quite dense, does not have an abundance of creosote. Some Joshua trees are present, but do not dominate. Several archeological camp and milling sites in the area have been recorded with the San Bernardino County Museum.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Cattle grazing is the primary land use in the area. A water tank and short access road are located in the southeast corner, but have little impact on the naturalness of the area. Another way separates the southeast corner from the rest of the area. This road, too, has little impact on the primeval character of the land, as it is gradually being reclaimed by the dense vegetation. A house just outside the roadless area at Blackwater Well has improvements which intrude into the western edge of the roadless area. These works of man do not dominate the landscape as they are screened by low hills immediately adjacent to the site.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude are outstanding. The large lava mesa provides an opportunity for a variety of wilderness-oriented activities. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are outstanding through the scenic volcanic features.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments were general statements directed at several roadless areas in the region and address study phase considerations.

AREA 173A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the north by a maintained dirt road from Blackwater Well into the China Lake Naval Weapons Center. The western and southern boundaries are also maintained dirt roads. The eastern border is Fort Irwin Military Reservation boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is entirely public land with the exception of approximately a quarter section of non-public land along the southwest boundary.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes Grass Valley and a series of scattered abrupt hills which are referred to locally as the "Parachutes". The hills are reddish brown to yellow in appearance. From a desert floor of approximately 3600 feet these hills reach a maximum elevation of 4687 feet. The valley supports a creosote scrub plant community with a scattering of Mojave yucca.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area retains its primeval character throughout. Cattle grazing is the only activity, with the effects being substantially unnoticeable. An allotment fence and a road to a stock watering tank enter the area from the north, near the northeast corner. Other ways in the area are being reclaimed by the dense desert vegetation which is lush throughout the area. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the boundaries of the roadless area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The thick vegetation provides ample screening of visitors from one another while the hills themselves provide good hiking objectives and visual variety in the landscape. Opportunities for solitude are outstanding as are opportunities for unrestricted movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment received did not substantiate lack of natural condition.

AREA 174

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The Twenty Mule Team Borax Road defines the southern limit of the roadless area and a pipeline parallel to U.S. 395 the western boundary. The northern boundary consists of a graded dirt road between Atolia and Blackhawk Well and a maintained dirt road between it and the Twenty Mule Team Borax Road is the eastern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 50 percent of the area is in public lands. Non-public lands are concentrated in the eastern region and in scattered blocks near Atolia.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is approximately two miles wide and twelve miles long. Within its boundaries are the mining town of Atolia and a long strip of broad alluvial plain between Red Mountain and Cuddeback Lake. The northern end of the Cuddeback Lake depression is included in the far eastern end. Elevations range from 2553 feet on the Cuddeback playa to 3400 feet at Atolia. Vegetation in the area is creosote scrub, except for the Almond Cove and Cuddeback areas where the Alkali Sink community dominates.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Extensive mining activity and many human habitations dominate the west end of the area around Atolia. Roads and ways radiate from the town. The entire west end is dominated by assessment holes, extensive excavations, and other mining and associated activity. Due to these factors, the primeval character of the land is not apparent. Man has severely altered the naturalness of the area. In the eastern half, one abandoned ranch site and several ways reduce naturalness. Off-road-vehicle activity is apparent and the effects of man's work are substantially noticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The extremely flat topography of the area provides no screening from other activities and recreationists in the area. Likewise, the vegetation does little to relieve the monotony. Opportunities for solitude are thus extremely limited. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

All comments received were in agreement with the evaluation.

AREA 175

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the south and east by the Randsburg Mojave Road; on the north by a telephone line maintenance road; on the east by a graded dirt road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 15 percent of the area is non-public land, located in the northeast corner and the southern edge.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The site includes a wide variety of terrain. The Rand Mountains rise abruptly from the desert floor, reaching close to 5000 feet. Steep canyons, deep valleys, bajadas, and interesting rock outcrops abound. Lower elevations reflect a typical desert environment, with creosote and desert shrubs and grasses. At higher elevations, excellent stands and outstanding single specimens of Joshua Trees can be found.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The site has been extensively mined in the past, with shafts, roads, ways, microwave towers, abandoned mines and debris scattered throughout. In addition, off-road vehicle use has left the area laced with scars. This very popular area has lost its natural character and, therefore, does not satisfy the minimal wilderness criteria for further consideration.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The nature of the terrain provides many outstanding opportunities for solitude. The highly eroded surfaces provide screening and natural barriers that insure isolation. However, the roads, ways, tracks, mine remnants, and other signs of man's work tend to provide psychological barriers in all directions that result in a lack of opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

All but one comment recommended that the area be deleted from further wilderness consideration. The one comment supporting further consideration did so on the basis of creating a buffer for the desert tortoise habitat.

AREA 176

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The site is bordered by U.S. 395 on the east; an extension of the Twenty Mule Team Parkway and graded dirt road on the north; Colgate Road on the west; and, the Mojave-Randsburg Road on the north.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 50 percent public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Sitting at the base of the Rand Mountains, northeast of California City, the site is a transition from rugged mountain to flat valley floor. The landform tends toward uniformity, with little vertical variation. Topography changes from flat land to low rolling hills, broken only by occasional shallow washes. Plant life is limited in size and variety and reflects the vegetative patterns of the surrounding lowlands. Creosote is the visually dominant plant, supported by low shrubs and grasses. In the higher area, near the Rand Mountains, occasional Joshua trees add some variety.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The integrity of the landscape has suffered from present and past uses. Numerous ways are apparent from off-road vehicle use and speculative development and are substantially noticeable impacts throughout the roadless area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Relative flatness and uniformity of the terrain, in conjunction with the low-growing vegetation and degradation by man's activities, preclude any outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments which addressed inventory criteria agreed with the findings.

AREA 177

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern border is formed by the Redrock-Randsburg Road; the eastern and western boundaries are two graded dirt roads that converge in the south.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site includes one parcel of non-public land which accounts for approximately 10 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Generally flat, with sloping bajada broken only with occasional shallow washes, the area is a transition from the northwestern face of the Rand Mountains to Fremont Valley. Vegetation tends to be sparse being limited to creosote and a few varieties of low-growing desert shrub.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The site has had heavy off-road-vehicle use. Signs of this activity show significant degradation throughout the landscape. The site also is laced with ways that severely detract from the primeval character and influence.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area is of uniform topography which limits the diversity of primitive recreation potential. Unconfined movement is limited as the visitor would frequently encounter ways and roads. The readily visible imprints of man's works do not give solitude to the visitor.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Specific comments relating to inventory criteria agreed with the findings.

AREA 178

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the north, west, and east by BLM-maintained roads and, to the south, by a California City road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Over 95 percent of the area is public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The site occupies the southwestern end of the Rand Mountains. It consists principally of rounded hills that slope gently to the south, but drop steeply into Fremont Valley to the north. Various colors are displayed in the exposed rocks. Vegetation is relatively sparse. Creosote and low desert shrubs account for most of the plant life. Joshua trees add variety in the higher elevations.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Vegetation has suffered from BLM designation of the area as "open" for vehicle use. Large, totally denuded areas are apparent. Motorcycle trails criss-cross the entire site and seriously degrade the integrity of the landscape. Man and machine appear to be the primary forces shaping the landscape.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The presence of motorcycle and jeep trails throughout the area drastically reduces opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. In addition, opportunities for solitude are limited due to the small size of the area and its rounded, open character.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments which addressed inventory considerations agreed with the findings.

AREA 179

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the north by the paved Red Rock-Randsburg Road and Southern Pacific Railroad line; on the east, by a BLM-maintained road; on the south, by a BLM-maintained road and an agriculture road; and, on the west, by a paved road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 60 percent of the area is public land. Non-public sections occur in blocks in the northeast and southwest.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes Koehn Dry Lake and portions of Fremont Valley. Vegetation is sparse in the valley and nonexistent on the dry lake, being limited to creosote and a few varieties of low-growing desert shrubs. The site is basically flat, open to Fremont Valley on the northeast and southwest, and enclosed by the El Paso Range and Rand Mountains to the northwest and southeast.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Portions of the roadless area do retain their primeval character; however, the majority of the lands are affected by the imprints of man's work. Agricultural development, in the form of irrigated alfalfa fields and supporting roads and structures, is apparent from anywhere within the roadless area. Random scars from off-road vehicle use are common, and several dwellings are present. The overall natural condition of the landscape reflects the constant presence of man.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area's flat terrain, sparse vegetative cover, and cultural modifications combine to reduce opportunities for both solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. There is little opportunity for visitors to be screened from one another, and the encroaching land uses confine the visitor.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Those comments addressed to inventory critera agreed with the findings. A large number of other comments were received asking for further protection of the Desert Tortoise within the area although the Desert Tortoise Natural Area is not in Area 179. This, however, is a study phase, rather than an inventory phase, consideration.

AREA 179A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located in Fremont Valley, north of California City, the area is bordered on all sides by streets and roads. The northern border is formed by the partially paved and partially graded Munsey Road and an extension at the eastern end. The western edge parallels Neuralia Road, and the southern end borders the streets of California City. The eastern boundary is a combination of the Randsburg-Mohave and Bucknell Roads.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 80 percent of the area is non-public land. Only two areas meet the inventory size requirement for 5000 acres of contiguous federal lands. These are located in the northern portion of the site and roughly coincide with the existing Desert Tortoise Natural Area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

With the exception of the southern end of the Rand Mountains, terrain is flat and broken only by shallow washes. The area is primarily a gently sloping plane ascending to the Rand Mountains to the north. Vegetation is sparse, with Creosote Bush scrub being the visually dominant plant species. Supporting the creosote are a few varieties of low, desert shrubs and grasses.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The public land is currently being utilized for the Desert Tortoise Natural Area. The Area has been fenced and marked with signs indicating present use. Many ways and trails degrade the overall natural condition. Prior to the Desert Tortoise Natural Area protective designation, these lands suffered from heavy off-road vehicle use. Presently, areas adjacent to the designated Natural Area are receiving heavy ORV use.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The relatively flat, uniform terrain and sparse vegetation reduces opportunities for solitude. Existing land use in and around the site precludes any outstanding opportunities for either primitive or unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A large number of comments were received asking for further protection of the Desert Tortoise in the area.

AREA 180

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is located southwest of the community of Ridgecrest. The northern boundary is a combination of Mesquite Canyon Road, and Last Chance Canyon Road. The eastern boundary is Mesquite Canyon Road, and the southern boundary is the Red Rock-Randsburg Road. The western boundary is Highway 14.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 20 percent of this area is non-public land. A concentrated non-public block occurs along the western boundary.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains a variety of geological features. There is a small valley by the southern boundary that rises sharply, forming a range of mountains several hundred feet above the valley floor. There is a cluster of medium-sized hills which contain dark masses of volcanic rocks. There are also deeply eroded canyons and washes. Last Chance Canyon contains geologic and scenic qualities near the Red Rock Canyon State Recreational Area. There are combinations of narrow, winding canyons and wide washes surrounded by brown hills and volcanic strata which has eroded over a long period of time. There are dense stands of creosote near the southern boundary. The mountain slopes accommodate a Creosote Scrub plant community including isolated Joshua trees.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The portion that generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature is located directly in the area just east of Red Rock State Recreational Area. The remaining area is affected by current mining activities which dominate the landscape. There are several permanent residents living in this area who actively work their mines.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of the dominance of man's activity on the landscape i.e., the heavy mining, roads and permanent residences, this area does not lend itself to outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many of the comments on file support inclusion of portions as potential wilderness indicating that the natural condition is intact and that joint management with the adjacent State Recreational Area enhances suitability. Field checks by the inventory team did not support these conclusions and the area was not added as a potential Wilderness Study Area.

AREA 181

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is a graded dirt road north of Red Rock Canyon State Recreational Area; the eastern boundary is U.S. 395; the southern boundary is the Jawbone Canyon Road; and, the western boundary is a utility power structure maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands nor is the area of sufficient size so that its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition would be practical.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments supported exclusion from further wilderness study due to degradation of natural conditions and the area's small size.

AREA 182

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is Dove Spring Canyon Road and connecting ranch road; the eastern boundary, the Los Angeles Aqueduct maintenance road; the southern boundary, Jawbone Canyon Road; the western boundary, Butterbredt Canyon Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 80-90 percent of this area has a checkerboard ownership pattern of public and non-public land. The northern portion, including Pinyon Mountain, is public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains a variety of mountains, valleys and foothills, and encompasses several vegetative types. The northern portion includes Gold Peak, Pinyon Mountain, and Mayan Peak. Gold Peak and Mayan Peak are gold-colored and rocky and support stands of Joshua trees in the lower elevations and desert shrub and native grass species in the higher elevations. Pinyon Mountain supports a stand of Pinyon Pine on its northern slope. These mountains gradually taper off to the south, forming small, rounded hills bisected by several washes. Scattered stands of Joshua trees are the dominant plants in a Sagebrush Scrub plant community. The southern portion is more restricted in the variety of geological landforms and vegetative types. The terrain consists of low, rolling hills that appear to be consistently of the same general size and shape.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The condition of the area reflects vehicle use through "open" and "special design" designations. Off-road vehicle activity is heavy. Ways and trails are numerous and of substantial impact to the landscape. Man and machine appear to be the dominant forces affecting the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive forms of recreation are restricted because of the numerous bike trails that have bisected this entire area into small segments. The trails are highly visible from great distances due to the contrast created where vegetation has been removed. Unconfined movement is restricted as the visitor often encounters areas where man's work is dominant.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Other than a few generalized comments about suitability of the area for use by off-road vehicles, the majority of comments indicated that the natural values were high and that potential for rehabilitation of disturbed areas was high. Field work by the inventory team revealed that works of man were extensive and that rehabilitation was not practical over such a largely disturbed region.

AREA 182A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is the Butterbredt Canyon Road; the southern boundary, the Jawbone Canyon Road; the eastern boundary, Butterbredt Canyon Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands, nor is it of sufficient size as to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments supported further study of the area and its potential for rehabilitation. Further field examination did not support those comments.

AREA 183

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is Jawbone Canyon Road; the eastern boundary, the Los Angeles Aqueduct maintenance road; the western boundary, a privately maintained road used by ranchers and not open for public use from Lone Tree Canyon north to Jawbone Canyon Road; and, the southern boundary, maintained roads for access to ranching operations.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 35 percent of this area is non-public land located in the northern portion in a checkerboard pattern. The majority of public land in this area is located in the southern portion, but barely exceeds the minimum 5000 acres of contiguous federal lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography is very diverse and scenic. The southeastern portion of this area contains gradually sloping bajadas with creosote and other associated desert shrub. Further up, the creosote is scattered and is not as high nor dense as the creosote in the bajadas. The northern portion contains valleys and bajadas that accommodate big sage, scattered stands of Juniper trees, creosote, and associated desert shrub. Cross Mountain (elevation 5192) and Chuckwalla Mountain (elevation 5006) have rocky outcroppings that have eroded, forming steep bajadas covered with low growing desert shrub and a few stands of Pinyon Pine. Larger valleys have formed between these mountains. The terrain near the western boundary tends to be composed of high rolling hills with steep bajadas sloping in all directions. The hills are covered in varying degrees with Juniper trees, a few stands of pine trees, big sage Creosote Bush Scrub, and annual grasses. The vegetation in the northern half is more abundant and diverse than the southern half.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Most of this area is not in a natural condition that has resulted in the entire area being eliminated from further wilderness consideration. Some of the intrusions include a mining road that branches off the eastern boundary near the crest of the mountain ranges and extends west to an active mine. The road is maintained, and recent activity encompasses mine shafts, slag piles, and a maintained building. The location of this mine and its imprint upon the landscape is screened by the rugged terrain and is however, substantially unnoticeable from most viewpoints. There is also a road up Little Jawbone Canyon a quarter of a mile. A sign posted at the gate stated, "Adventure Unlimited - Private - Property." The White Rock Mine is also an active mining area. There are many off-road vehicle and motorcycle ways within this area that seriously affect the area's naturalness or integrity.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Although there are 5000 acres of contiguous public land in this area, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation would be restricted because of the many off-road vehicle trails which confine and restrict any attempt to experience either an outstanding opportunity for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments expressed motorized recreational interests as well as recognition of natural values.

AREA 184

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary consists of a series of maintained ranching roads. The eastern boundary runs south through Jawbone Canyon along ranching roads, across Airplane Flat to Tolly Spring and Lone Tree Canyon. It then runs northeast out Lone Tree Canyon to the Los Angeles Aqueduct road which defines the remainder of the eastern boundary to Highway 58 which is the southern boundary. The western boundary is the California Desert Conservation Area border.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 65-70 percent of the area is non-public land, located in a contiguous block at the southern end and along the western boundary.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

A variety of landforms and plant communities are represented. From the desert floor, at 2500 feet, the southern Sierra rise abruptly to a high point of 6588 feet. Many peaks are over 5000 feet. The Creosote Bush Scrub plant community is dominant along the eastern edge with east-facing slopes reflecting the desert environment. The long deep canyons have riparian habitat with dense areas of rabbitbush. The canyon slopes are covered with sage species which transform into Pinyon-Juniper associations high on the canyon slopes. The higher flats, at 5000 feet and above, are grass-covered with stands of White Fir at the base of the rocky peaks and the higher sheltered canyon areas where water is abundant.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The desert portions of the roadless area are substantially impacted by the works of man. The bajadas along the southern and eastern boundaries have many ways and trails detracting from the natural values of the area. Off-road vehicle use has significantly altered the condition of Barren Ridge. Maintained roads penetrate the roadless area to the end of Lone Tree Canyon, to Tolly Spring, to Hungry Spring, and to Weldon Pond. Ways in Section 28 (T. 30 S., R. 35 E.), detract from the naturalness in that area. These ways support grazing operations, and lead to developed springs and ranch sites. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries but exclude the ways and improvements noted herein. These exclusions are well-screened from the natural portions due to the great vegetational density and variety and topographic diversity. The contiguous sections of public lands all retain their primeval character and influence and form a manageable unit of adequate size in the southern end.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Within the potential Wilderness Study Area opportunities for solitude are outstanding in this rugged mountain environment. The extremely irregular terrain with rugged mountain peaks and deep canyons provide outstanding opportunities for a diversity of primitive and unconfined types of recreation. These opportunities are lacking on Barren Ridge and along the eastern desert portion due to the human impacts and presence in the area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments expressed motorized recreational interest in the general area.

AREA 185

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern border is the Twenty Mule Team Borax Road. On the south and east, the area is bordered by the Cuddeback Gunnery Range Road. The western border is a pipeline parallel to U.S. 395.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 45 percent public lands, with non-public holdings occurring in a checkerboard pattern. This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments received were in support of including the area as a potential Wilderness Study Area.

AREA 185A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is the Twenty Mule Team Borax Road. The eastern boundary is a maintained dirt road through the hills known as the "Parachutes" which connects with another maintained dirt road at Arena Mine to form the southern boundary. The western boundary is a graded dirt road along the western edge of Cuddeback Gunnery Range.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 59 percent public land. A contiguous block of eight sections along the western border is a withdrawal for the Cuddeback Gunnery Range. The area takes on a checkerboard public/non-public ownership pattern along the southern boundary.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of a broad west-facing alluvial slope between 2700 feet and 3600 feet with scattered abrupt hills of reddish coloration projecting from the alluvium to 4200 feet. Vegetation in the area is typical creosote scrub.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Those sections within the gunnery range have been substantially altered by the presence of man. The U.S. Air Force uses the area for bombing target practice and for other aerial gunnery maneuvers. The land is extensively pock-marked from this activity. In the area of checkerboard ownership at the southern end, off-road vehcicle activity has altered the primeval character of the land. Elsewhere in the roadless area man's impacts are substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude are lacking within the area due to the location of the Cuddeback Gunnery Range and lack of vegetative or topographic screening. The lack of diversity in the terrain of the area does not allow for a variety of unconfined recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments received.

AREA 186

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western boundary is a pipeline which runs parallel to U.S. 395. The northern border is a maintained dirt road to Cuddeback Gunnery Range which continues to the southwest corner of the U.S. Naval Weapons Center. The eastern boundary is another dirt road from the southwest corner of the Naval Weapons Center south through Black Canyon to the telephone cable road which is the southern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area has checkerboard ownership, with non-public sections covering approximately 65 percent of the total area. The area does not contain 5000 acres or more of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority were general comments on various recreational interests in the area. A few comments addressed the natural condition.

AREA 186A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the east by Copper City Road. The southern boundary is a maintained dirt road through Coolgardie Camp. The west boundary is a graded dirt road to mining activity north of Murphy's Well and further into Superior Valley. The northern boundary is composed of several connecting maintained dirt roads south of Superior Lake.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 45 percent public land. Non-public sections occur in a checkerboard pattern.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area encompasses a portion of Superior Valley to the north and scattered hills and buttes on the south slope. The vegetative communities range from Alkali Sink in the Superior Lake area through creosote scrub and Joshua tree woodland toward Coolgardie Camp. Elevations range from 3000 feet in Superior Valley to 3800 feet on the desert floor and up to 4082 feet on the scattered buttes. The terrain is extremely even, with exception of the buttes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Several ways cross this area as access to inhabited and uninhabited mining claims scattered around the bases of the buttes. The impacts are substantially noticeable where man remains and is not just a visitor. Other impacts include a large, active pumice pit and quarry north of Murphy's Well and mining and milling activity at Coolgardie Camp where human habitation is also evident. Checkerboard land status over much of the area allows easy land access. As a result, houses and other signs of human habitation are scattered over the east half, from Coolgardie Camp north to Wells Hill.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The buttes in the area are simple hills with no canyons or ridge systems to provide screening from the scattered human habitations or from other visitors. Opportunities for solitude are lacking in the portions where man remains an inhabitant. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are also limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received agreed with the findings.

AREA 186B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the north by the U.S. Naval Weapons Center. The other three boundaries of this rectangular roadless area are maintained dirt roads used for access into grazing leases.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The southern half of the area is in a checkerboard pattern of ownership with approximately 60 percent of the land non-public. The northern half is largely public lands with scattered non-public holdings.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area encompasses a large portion of Superior Valley including a large playa (Superior Dry Lake). Terrain is even, with plant communities consisting of Alkali Sink Scrub and Ccreosote Scrub.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Imprints of man's work can be found. Several ways criss-cross the area as access to several well sites and isolated mining areas in the lower Slocum Mountains along the northern boundary. These ways, and several others which do not show on the topographic maps, are apparently maintained by the passage of vehicles only and are not substantially noticeable with respect to the overall natural condition. Mining activity is also substantially unnoticeable where it occurs.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

There is a lack of topographical variation which results in a lack of unconfined diversity for recreational experiences. Vegetation within the area does reach sufficient height and density to provide some limited screening; however, these opportunities are marginal and not found with consistency.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received expressed various recreational interests in the area.

AREA 186C

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area's southern boundary is a telephone cable line and accompanying maintenance road. Other boundaries are maintained dirt roads in support of grazing and mining activities.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is approximately 53 percent public land in a checkerboard pattern which alternates with non-public sections in the southern and eastern portion. Two tracts containing 5000 or more acres of public land are located in this transition zone.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area encompasses Black Mountain, Opal Mountain, and portions of Superior and Water Valleys. Black Mountain consists of a large area of exposed basalt rising approximately 1900 feet from the desert floor. The mountain is nearly black, with sparse shrub vegetation where accumulation of soil occurs. The south side of this flat-topped mountain rises abruptly from the alluvium north of Harper Lake as does the west side from Black Canyon. The northern and eastern sides fade more gradually with systems of basalt dikes ending at Superior Valley and the Opal Mountain area. At the southeastern corner of Black Mountain is a deposit of fine-grained Holocene dune sand blown from Harper Lake which is striking in contrast to the nearly black basalt of Black Mountain.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Imprints of man's work occur in a rather localized area. A series of ways intrude from the southeast corner as access to the Opal Mountain area. This is a favorite recreation area and these impacts are substantially noticeable. This corridor of access continues on to the northwest to connect with the Black Canyon Road. The area north and east of Opal Mountain, though relatively undisturbed by man, does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands. The area associated with Black Mountain does contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land as it encompasses a portion of the transition zone between two different ownership patterns, and retains its primeval character. The boundary of the potential Wilderness Study Area beginning at the southern end of Black Canyon runs southeast along the lower edge of the basalt face of Black Mountain to the southeast limit of this volcanic flow. From this point the boundary runs due north approximately three and one quarter miles to a lava canyon in section 28. The boundary then runs generally northwest through the canyon and along the basalt faces to Black Canyon Road. Black Canyon Road forms the western boundary.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The uplifted basalt area of Black Mountain provides isolation and outstanding opportunities for solitude as screening is provided by the series of ridge and canyons across the flow. The diversity and uneven surface provide outstanding opportunities, as well, for a variety of primitive and unconfined recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received expressed various recreational interests in the area such as rockhounding. None of the mentioned access routes are affected by the potential Wilderness Study Area boundaries.

AREA 187

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is roughly triangular in shape, bordered along the east and west by maintained dirt roads and, on the north, by the China Lake Naval Weapons Center Mojave B Range.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 82 percent public lands, with non-public sections concentrated in the southern half.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Terrain is nearly flat from the eastern border at East Well to the extreme northwest corner five miles away. This includes the larger Superior Lake playa and another smaller playa bisected by the west border. The plant community dominant through the area is the Alkali Sink Scrub.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area contains several ways which may never have been maintained by any means other than random recreational use. These ways are not substantially noticeable through much of the area as the playa is annually flooded by winter rains. Permanent improvements include some large concrete footings at East Well. The remainder of the area is affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of extremely flat terrain, there is little opportunity for isolation from other visitors. Vegetation does little to provide screening. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are also limited, as the area lacks diversity in recreational potential and vegetative or topographic features to provide for such opportunity.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The comments were equally distributed both in favor and against the proposed recommendation.

AREA 188

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area has as its eastern boundary Fort Irwin Road and, as its western boundary, Copper City Road and another maintained dirt road extending further north to the Old Goldstone site. Portions of the northern and eastern boundaries are formed by the Fort Irwin Military Reservation boundary and the Goldstone Tracking Station network boundary. The southern boundary is a maintained dirt road to Williams Well which turns southeast through a large wash just north of Lane Mountain to Fort Irwin Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The roadless area is approximately 81 percent public lands. Non-public lands occur in a checkerboard pattern across the southern one-third of the area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of an elevated plateau lying north of Lane Mountain with long sloping bajadas and scattered sharp hills and ridges. The largest feature is the Paradise Range which consists of a highly eroded east face of the plateau rather than a mountain range. Elevations in the area range from just under 1840 feet along Fort Irwin Road at the base of the Paradise Range to 4540 feet near the Montana Mine in the northern one-third of the area. Elevations on the rolling bajadas range between 3000 feet and 3400 feet. Vegetation across the bajadas and hills consists largely of creosote and related desert shrubs, with scattered Joshua trees and Mojave yucca. At lower elevations, along Fort Irwin Road, the Joshua trees are absent.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Extensive mining with human habitation occurs around the Old Goldstone area and in the higher hills near the Montana Mine along the Fort Irwin Military Reservation boundary. Roads and ways lace the area around the mines further detracting from the primeval character of the land. Other development along Copper City Road also detracts from the primeval character and influence. Several structures and range improvements are found, such as developed watering sites and drift fences. Man's work is substantially noticeable throughout the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area is of ample size, topographic relief, and vegetative density to provide screening and isolation from other visitors. Extensive roads and ways penetrate the area and serve to limit opportunites for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Opportunities for solitude are limited in several portions by the presence of human habitation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received acknowledged some impairment of the natural condition.

AREA 189

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The roughly triangular area has a steel-structure powerline and graded maintenance road as its southeast boundary. The west boundary is a maintenance road for a wooden pole utility line. The northern boundary is the Fort Irwin Military Reservation.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 60 percent public lands which occur in a checkerboard pattern with random variation.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The western half of the area includes the Coyote Lake depression. The eastern half is dominated by Alvord Mountain and the adjacent bajada. Vegetation is very sparse; however, washes which penetrate the range and collect soil support a limited number of low shrubs. The dominant plant community is Alkali Sink Scrub which may transcend into Shadscale Scrub away from the playas. In the southern hills the Creosote Scrub plant community becomes evident.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man's works dominate the landscape in the Coyote Lake depression. The area has been used for military tank practice operations and is split into several sections by tracks or ways up to 50 feet wide. The scattered hills located at the south end are the scene of a major archaeological dig, administered by the San Bernardino County Museum, and surrounded by several ways which further detract from the primeval character and influence of the land. Much of the valley floor between Coyote Lake and the Alvord Mountains has been impacted by random off-road vehicle use and military operations; however, the mountains themselves are relatively unimpacted. Some minor mining activity has occurred, but it is screened from most angles.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Lack of vegetative screening limits opportunities for solitude. In the southern hills, and in spite of a certain amount of topographic relief, opportunities for solitude are also absent, due to the constant presence of man at the archaeological site. Alvord Mountain does provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. This is the only region in the area where wilderness values are present, topography provides the necessary screening, and man is not present; however, it does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments on file point out the mineral potential in the area; some disagreed with the assessment of natural conditions.

AREA 190

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The eastern and northern boundaries are wooden pole utility lines and maintenance roads. The southern boundary is the frontage road on the north side of Interstate 40 and a paved access loop to Calico Ghost Town. The western border is the Yermo cutoff and Fort Irwin Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 70 percent public lands. Non-public inholdings are scattered over the entire area and are usually irregularly-shaped, patented mining claims.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The major feature is the highly eroded and colorful Calico Mountain Range. From the desert floor at 2200 feet, the mountains rise to a maximum height of 4542 feet on Calico Peak. Terrain through these mountains is rugged and scenic. Though mostly barren, the Creosote Scrub community dominates the flats and lower alluvium.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Throughout most of this area, the imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable. Toward the southern end is Calico Ghost Town, which is refurbished, with restaurants and gift shops. Throughout the mountains north and west from Calico, extensive mining activity has resulted in a general restructuring of the face of the mountains. Access roads are stacked along the slopes and shafts riddle the hillsides. In the mountainous area southwest of Calico, the mining activity is heavy with several large patented claims. There is a communications site atop Calico Peak with a maintained road for access to the top through Mule Canyon. The Calico Mountains are an area where man's works dominate the landscape.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The canyons and valley of the rugged Calico Mountains would provide screening and suitable terrain for a diversity of primitive types of recreation. The area would provide outstanding opportunities for solitude; however, imprints of man's work are always evident, thus severely limiting or perhaps negating opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received agreed with the evaluation.

AREA 191

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

On the west, the area is bordered by Copper City Road and a maintained dirt road to Lane Well. A dirt road from Lane Well connects with Fort Irwin Road through a large wash just north of Lane Mountain and comprises the northern boundary. The east and south boundaries are defined by Fort Irwin Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 72 percent public land. Non-public lands occur in alternating north-south strips through the central and eastern portions.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of a highly eroded interface between two alluvial plains of different altitudes in the southern end of scattered hills and dales associated with the northwest extent of the Calico Mountains. The upper plain lies at approximately 4000 feet and consists of creosote scrub and scattered Joshua trees. The lower plain lies at approximately 2800 feet and also consists of creosote scrub. The interface is sparsely vegetated.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Within the area three developed well sites and a network of ways on the northwest side of Lane Mountain detract from the apparent naturalness. A maintained blacktop road leads to a communications site atop Lane Mountain. This site is usually visible from the alluvial plains around the mountain. One way which apparently sees frequent use bisects the area. The lower half is dominated by the huge Speakeasy Mine, which constitutes a major disruption in the primeval character and influence of the land. Human habitation occurs at this mine as well.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude among the well-screened, highly eroded canyons south of Lane Mountain. Portions of this region provide isolation from nearby intrusions and visual isolation from the communications site atop Lane Mountain. Though diversity for primitive and unconfined recreation is available through the erosional features, the opportunities could not be considered outstanding. Imprints of man, such as formerly maintained ways, are frequently encountered.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments on the area were split into two groups: One group is in agreement with the evaluation; the other indicates that intrusions in the area are sufficiently screened so as not to affect the naturalness of the entire area.

AREA 192

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is triangular and has as its northeast boundary the Yermo Cutoff; as its southern boundary a buried telephone cable road; and, as its northern boundary, Fort Irwin Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 75 percent public lands. A concentrated block of non-public lands is located in the southeast corner.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is mostly extremely flat and covered with Creosote Scrub vegetation. At the north, a large sand wash cuts through a series of low eroded hills of uniform light brown coloration.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

In the southern end, a few unmaintained ways are noticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The extremely flat terrain and low vegetation within the roadless area provide no screening from nearby improvements, such as the large powerline structure along the southwest border or the telephone cable right-of-way on the southern border. Opportunities for solitude are extremely limited. Ways and permanent improvements within the area limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Uniformity of terrain offers little recreational diversity.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received related to study phase factors.

AREA 192A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is triangular with a buried telephone cable road as its northern boundary; Ghost Town Road as its eastern boundary; and, as its southern boundary, a steel-structure powerline.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 80 percent public land, with non-public holdings occurring in scattered sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is generally of very even terrain with a series of low eroded hills of light brown coloration toward the northwest.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area generally retains its natural condition, though several ways are visible.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The extremely flat terrain and low vegetation provide no screening from nearby improvements such as the large powerline and obvious scar of the telephone cable right-of-way. Opportunities for solitude are limited. The small size and elongated shape also limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, while the uniformity of terrain provides little diversity.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received related to study phase factors.

AREA 193

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area's southern border is a buried telephone cable and maintenance road (Fossil Bed Road). The northern boundary is a curving, maintained dirt road connecting the cable road, Coolgardie Camp, and Copper City Road, which is the eastern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 60 percent public lands with a block of approximately 8000 acres located in the center. Non-public lands are in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes a convoluted group of hills of highly eroded, richly colored sedimentary strata. To the north is an elevated plateau of Joshua Tree woodland. Sloping alluvium to the west and south of the hills contains Creosote Scrub vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

BLM maintains a 31-space improved campground in Owl Canyon near Fossil Bed Road in the south-central region. In neighboring Rainbow Basin, which has been designated as a Natural Landmark, a maintained loop provides access to this area, where the richly colored sedimentary layers have yielded notable fossils. Off-road vehicle use is the predominant form of recreation in the area. Impacts from this type of use are substantially noticeable wherever access is possible through the canyons, over the less rocky slopes, and across the alluvial areas. North of the hills, the Joshua Tree Woodland is laced with ways. This has traditionally been a favorite recreation area, where roads and ways have had a significant impact upon the primeval character and influence of the land. Firepits, burnt Joshua Trees, and vehicle tracks dominate. Mining activity is limited to a few small prospects.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The canyons provide adequate screening from other visitors and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. A diversity in types of primitive recreation is also available. However, the area has been severely impacted throughout by the use of off-road vehicles. Ways which literally lace some portions of the roadless area severely limit potential for unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received point out the paleontological values and opportunities for solitude along with the presence of many impacts.

AREA 194

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area's northern boundary is a buried telephone cable road. At the southeast corner, a two-mile section of Fort Irwin Road connects the cable road (Fossil Bed Road) with a steel-structure powerline which is the southern boundary. A blacktop road north of Hinkley (Rainbow Ranch Road) is the western boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 60 percent public lands, with non-public sections scattered throughout.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes a large alluvial plain associated with Water Valley which consists of Creosote Scrub and Shadscale Scrub plant communities and is cut by several shallow, rocky washes. At the eastern end are the Waterman Hills, a simple range rising 500 to 700 feet from the valley floor. Though sparsely vegetated, these hills do support some Joshua trees and scattered shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Though some ranching and small agricultural developments occur along the western boundary, the area is largely without substantially noticeable developments that impact the primeval character and influence of the land. Two unmaintained ways cross the area from northeast to southwest.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The extremely even terrain of the western 75 percent of this area contains no topographic or vegetative features to provide screening from other visitors, thus limiting opportunities for solitude. The Waterman Hills do not provide for a diversity of potential recreational experiences and are enclosed by dominating borders. The area lacks outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received agree with findings.

AREA 195

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area has as its northern border the maintenance road (Fossil Bed Road) for a buried telephone cable. The southern boundary is a steel-structure powerline; the western boundary, a pipeline which parallels U.S. 395; and, the eastern boundary a blacktop and graded dirt road (Rainbow Ranch Road) north from Hinkly to Fossil Bed Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is 44 percent public land. Ownership is in a checkerboard pattern with a solid block of non-public land through the east-central portion near Harper Lake.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This rectangular area is nearly 20 miles long from east to west and six miles wide from north to south. The western half is a large alluvial plain with occasional small ridges and a series of small, abrupt buttes rising 150 feet to 200 feet from the plain. The creosote scrub community is dominant in this portion. The eastern half consists of Harper Lake and Water Valley. The playa of Harper Lake is without vegetation, while the nearby alluvium supports Alkali Sink and Shadscale Scrub.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Evidence of man's work is visible to some degree throughout the area. The western half is considerably less impacted than the eastern half. The extensive creosote plain of the west half is broken by a few low ridges where mining activity is apparent. Access roads have been graded to these sites, but receive minimal maintenance. The impact on these low hills is significant and does alter their primeval character. The buttes are located near the northern border and have been impacted by heavy recreational use. This is a favorite camping area and off-road vehicle use has substantially reduced the apparent naturalness. About a dozen sections of land around Harper Lake are devoted to agricultural development. The entire west end of the Lake is in private ownership. In addition to the alfalfa fields, human habitation and a network of irrigation system maintenance roads are evident. The playa itself has several graded dirt roads across the surface. In Water Valley, human habitation and many access routes to range improvements detract from the primeval character and influence of the land. Man's own works dominate the landscape throughout the eastern half of the roadless area. Permanent improvements and human habitation are apparent. The western half, though significantly altered in some areas, contains a relatively large area unaffected by man's works.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The even nature of the terrain and lack of vegetative screening, as well as the presence of human habitation throughout much of the area, virtually eliminate outstanding opportunities for solitude. Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are not apparent.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received agree with findings.

AREA 196

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the north by a steel-structure powerline. The east boundary is a graded dirt road (Black's Ranch Road) and the south boundary is Hinkley Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is roughly 50 percent public land but does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received agree with findings.

AREA 197

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered along its northern edge by a steel-structure powerline; along its western edge by a blacktop and graded dirt road north from Hinkley (Rainbow Ranch Road); and, along the eastern edge, by Fort Irwin Road. The southern boundary starts at Hinkley, running due east along the highway paralleling the Santa Fe Railroad. It connects with Highway 58 to a dirt road which loops to the north to exclude many of the hills northwest of Barstow.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 42 percent public lands but does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received agree with findings.

AREA 198

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area has as its northern border a steel-structure powerline. To the east, the roadless area is defined by Harper Lake Road. The western border is a gas pipeline and maintenance road. The southern boundary is Shadow Mountain Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 68 percent public lands with non-public sections crossing in north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes the Kramer Hills in the northwest corner and a vast creosote-covered plain. Elevations vary from a high of 3120 feet in the Kramer Hills to a low of 2480 feet at Helendale in the southeast corner.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The low Kramer Hills have been extensively mined. Access routes are numerous and are used as much by rockhounds as miners. An abandoned powerline maintenance road splits the area from northeast to southwest. Several sections of land in the southern half of the area have been impacted by speculative development. Access roads and street networks have been carved into the desert floor. The area is commonly used for competitive motorcycle events. These impacts are substantially noticeable and significantly detract from the primeval character and influence of the land.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The Kramer Hills are low ridges which do not provide screening from other visitors or give any feeling of isolation due to the proximity of U.S. 395, the large powerlines, and the nearby commercial development at Kramer Junction. The vast cresote plain provides no vegetative screening; however, its size does provide for outstanding opportunities for solitude. The topography lacks diversity and is impacted by many ways which negate opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments indicate the natural condition of the area has been impaired.

AREA 199

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This extremely elongated roadless area is bordered on its long sides by Interstate 15 and a gas pipeline and maintenance road. The southern end is bordered by a graded dirt road, and the northern end tapers nearly to a point.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 80 percent public lands with non-public sections scattered along the length.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of a two-mile-wide strip of creosote plain approximately 15 miles long. Elevations range from 2350 feet at the northern end to 3320 feet at the southern end. Other than a barely discernible ridge near the center, no topographical features are present.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Several ways used by recreationists are visible, including several motorcycle trails. Camping areas which are habitually used reflect some reduction in the apparent naturalness. Overall, however, the works of man do not dominate the landscape.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The elongated shape and lack of topographic and vegetative screening allows the constant noise and visual intrusion of I-15 to dominate the entire roadless area. Opportunities for solitude or primitive and inconfined types of recreation are severely limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received agreed with the evaluation.

AREA 200

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the north by a maintained dirt road. The eastern border is Interstate 15. The southern border is Oro Grande Canyon Road. The western boundary is Old National Trails Highway.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is about 50 percent public lands in a contiguous block through the center. The largest concentration of non-public lands occurs along the western boundary.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

In the center of the area, Silver Mountain rises to 4211 feet. Alluvium to the west slopes into the Mojave Valley. On the other sides of the mountain, scattered hills strewn with large boulders and canyons are dominant features. The Creosote Scrub plant community is evident where soil accumulation occurs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Throughout the entire area, extensive active mines of various size and several large-scale quarry operations dominate the landscape. Graded gravel and blacktop access roads enter the area especially from the south and west though ways are present all around the mountain. The peak of Silver Mountain is a communications site which is currently being used by several agencies with several structures visible. These extensive permanent improvements severely alter the primeval character and influence of this roadless area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The presence of permanent improvements, human activity, and access routes negate opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received indicated a lack of wilderness characteristics.

AREA 201

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western border is Interstate 15. In three segments, the southern and eastern boundary is defined by a major steel-structure powerline corridor, a minor steel-structure powerline, and Stoddard Well Road. The northern border is a pipeline and streets associated with suburban development at the south end of Barstow.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 60 percent public lands. Non-public sections occur in north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the western end of Daggett Ridge, the west side of Stoddard Valley, scattered hills and ridges in the valley and, to the extreme south, Ritz Peak: at 4456 feet, a mountain of dark rock with well-vegetated bajadas of creosote and scattered yucca with a variety of small cactus species. Elsewhere, ridges and hills through the valley are light in color. The vegetation consists largely of Creosote Scrub and is accented with scattered Mojave yucca and cactus.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Mining occurs in isolated areas on a small scale and does not have a noticeable impact. The dominant factor reducing the primeval character and influence of the land is off-road vehicle use. This is a traditional off-road vehicle race site for two major four-wheel drive events and dozens of motorcycle races annually. The four-wheel vehicle course runs some 40 miles through the valley and, in some areas, is four to five lanes wide of denuded land. Large pit and staging areas are also denuded of vegetation. Many hills have tracks and trails over the slopes from random use and organized competition. There is a highly visible communications site on Daggett Ridge. The only area where the apparent naturalness is retained is at Ritz Peak, a very small segment of the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The low ridges in Stoddard Valley provide screening to only small areas, as canyons are usually shallow and slopes fairly gentle. Vegetation is not tall and does little to enhance the screening effect. Though attainable in some small areas, such as Ritz Peak, opportunities for solitude are not outstanding in the area. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are also limited by the sheer number of trails and ways.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments agreed with the evaluation.

AREA 202

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This small triangular roadless area is bordered by Highway 247 to the east; a large three-tower, steel-structure powerlines to the south; and, Stoddard Well Road to the west.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 80 percent public lands surrounding two sections of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The boundaries encompass a small portion of Stoddard Valley and a group of medium-sized hills typical of Stoddard Valley. The dominant plant community is Creosote Scrub. Elevations range from 2800 feet in the valley to 3478 feet on the ridge lines.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Heavy off-road vehicle scarring is evident throughout the area. Dozens of organized, competitive motorcycle events are held in the area annually. Vehicle ways and motorcycle trails lace the area and are of substantial impact upon the primeval character of the landscape. In contrast to areas where the land is primarily affected by the forces of nature, this area is affected primarily by man and machine.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The relatively simple terrain provides little topographic screening to provide isolation from the impacts of man's work or other visitors. Vegetative influences are also minimal in this respect. Opportunities for solitude are lacking. The existence of extensive systems of ways and trails limits or negates opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Imprints of man's work are frequently encountered.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments were in agreement with the findings and pointed out extensive ways through the area.

AREA 203

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered to the north by a pipeline and maintenance road. The southern boundary is a major three-tower, steel-structured powerline corridor. To the west, the boundary is Highway 247.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 43 percent public lands, which form a contiguous central block of approximately 5000 acres.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The southern end of the area includes a portion of the Stoddard Valley creosote plain and lies at approximately 2800 feet. Through the center, from northwest to southeast, is Daggett Ridge which rises to 3484 feet and descends to 2890 feet at Barstow Road. The southern portion of the ridge is very rocky and supports scattered Mojave yucca and cactus species in a Creosote Scrub community. The northern portion of the ridge is relatively barren and of yellowish to light brown coloration. North of Daggett Ridge, a long rocky alluvial slope descends toward the Mojave River Valley.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A county refuse disposal site located near Barstow Road creates a major solid waste pollution problem over several square miles near the west side of the area. Impacts from this site significantly reduce the apparent naturalness of the area. One to two miles inside the southern boundary another steel-structure powerline, with no accompanying maintenance road, parallels that border and is substantially noticeable. At the northeast corner, withdrawn lands contain a Marine Corps firing range. Lands in the central portion and in Stoddard Valley are occasionally used for competitive motorcycle events and are often used by locals as an off-road vehicle area. The cumulative effect has been alteration of the primeval character and influence of the land. The effect of man's work is substantially noticeable through much of the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Topographic screening provides isolation from other visitors only in the southern portion of Daggett Ridge; however, two parallel sets of powerline structures are intrusions. Lack of vegetative or topographic isolation limits opportunities for solitude. Other impacts from man's works are apparent in other parts of the area and work to negate outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments indicated the presence of many ways and agreed with the findings.

AREA 204

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the east by Highway 247. The southern border is a graded gravel road running the length of North Lucerne Valley. Stoddard Well Road forms the short western boundary, and the northern boundary is the three-tower, steel-structure powerline corridor in Stoddard Valley.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is about 50 percent public lands. A contiguous block of these lands occurs through the center, along Stoddard Ridge into the western one-third of the roadless area. A solid block of non-public land makes up the entire area of North Lucerne Valley.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area encompasses the southern end of Stoddard Valley at 3000 feet; North Lucerne Valley at 3200 to 3400 feet; and, Stoddard Ridge at 4300 feet to 4800 feet, which runs east-west and separates the two valleys. The eastern half of Stoddard Ridge is narrow and extremely abrupt and jagged. Toward the west, the ridge widens to two miles and is a mountain ridge rather than an abrupt rocky line. Vegetation through the valleys consists of creosote scrub, while the higher slopes of the western portion of the ridge supports some Joshua and several Mojave yuccas.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Scattered areas contain certain wilderness characteristics, but do not contain these factors in combination with manageable boundaries which would make practical their preservation and use in an unimpaired condition. North Lucerne Valley is entirely in private ownership to the base of Stoddard Ridge. Numerous ways provide access to a number of improvements and human habitations. These impacts affect the apparent naturalness of the valley. Stoddard Valley has been severely impacted by off-road vehicle use. Two major four-wheel-drive events and dozens of competitive motorcycle events occur here annually. The effect of this activity is substantially noticeable. A large denuded swath from the four-wheel-drive events runs several miles through this portion of the valley and many heavily-used motorcycle trails run over the hills and across the valley floor. A large camping area located in the narrow section of Stoddard Ridge near the east end is a center of random off-road vehicle activity. The primeval character and influence of the land has been significantly altered. At the broad western end of Stoddard Ridge, a portion of the roadless area appears to be untrammeled by man. Vegetation here includes Mojave yucca and a few Joshua trees in relatively good condition.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The extremely flat terrain of North Lucerne Valley and of Stoddard Valley does not provide any screening to isolate visitors from each other. This limits opportunities for solitude. The east section of Stoddard Ridge is a simple rocky wall without canyons and, though it provides better isolation than the surrounding valleys, does not provide an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The west end of Stoddard Ridge does provide adequate screening and isolation. This small area does appear to provide an outstanding opportunity for solitude, though no visible borders are available to separate the area from the impacted portions of the roadless area. Diversity in primitive and unconfined types of recreation is lacking in the valley areas, thus limiting opportunities.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments indicated the presence of many ways in the area, but agreed with the findings.

AREA 205

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern border is a major transmission corridor containing three steel-structure powerlines. The western boundary is Highway 247. The southern boundary is a gas pipeline and the eastern boundary is Camp Rock Road and a pipeline right-of-way. These are both graded dirt roads.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 65 percent public lands with non-public sections occurring mostly in a north to south column.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of eastern Stoddard Valley, Daggett Ridge, and, toward the north, an alluvial deposit sloping from Daggett Ridge toward the Mojave River Valley. The Stoddard Valley floor lies at approximately 3000 feet and is composed of typical high desert Creosote Scrub Plant community. In the upper center is Daggett Ridge, which reaches 4000 feet toward the northwest. It is sedimentary, iron-rich, and highly eroded, creating a convoluted landscape, exposing colorful rock layers through the canyons. Northeast from Daggett Ridge is another unnamed group of highly eroded hills of volcanic origin, which are associated with the Newberry Mountains. Long ridges run in a northerly direction onto the alluvial slope of the Mojave Valley. This alluvial slope has lush creosote scrub vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Stoddard Valley is an area where man's work has had a definite effect on the earth's surface and its community of life. Speculative development was initiated at one time. Roads and streets were cut into the desert floor. At the southern end of the valley, the small ridge north of Goat Mountain is the scene of mining activity. Elsewhere, within the area, the imprint of man's work is also substantially noticeable. A road is recognized into the area to a patented claim in Section 10 (T. 8 N., R. 1 E.). Other ways which were apparently maintained in the past branch off providing access to many areas of Daggett Ridge. These ways bisect the roadless area into several smaller sections. No portions of the roadless area are being considered as a potential Wilderness Study Area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area consists of a network of highly-eroded ridges. These features provide screening from outside influences, such as the private development in the Mojave Valley and the scars of speculative development in Stoddard Valley. Likewise, these topographic features enhance the recreational carrying capacity of the area by isolating users. Roads and ways detract from the primitive recreational potential.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Specific comments were split: some indicated that a larger area than shown contained wilderness characteristics; while others suggested that the area was too impacted throughout to meet the wilderness criteria.

AREA 206

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the north by a pipeline which runs parallel to Interstate 40. The western border is made up of a small section of a steel-structure powerline corridor and Camp Rock Road. The southeastern border is formed by a gas pipeline. (From its junction with Camp Rock Road, this pipeline runs northeast through Kane Wash until it emerges into the edge of the Mojave Valley. It then turns and runs just north of true east, finally reaching its intersection with the northern border at a very shallow angle, approximately nine miles east of the Newberry Mountains).

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 69 percent public lands with non-public holdings occurring in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The major feature of the area is the Newberry Mountain system. These mountains rise to a height of 4800 feet from the desert floor to the north, which lies at approximately 2400 feet. Of volcanic origin, the main block of mountains consists of several rugged ridges. Intervening canyons and lower hills are highly eroded. The western portion of these mountains consists of a series of parallel north-south ridges extending onto the alluvial fan, which forms the southern slope of the Mojave River Valley. The elongated eastern finger of the area includes a portion of the Troy Lake depression and sinks to less than 1800 feet. With the exception of a small area of Alkali Sink Scrub at Troy Lake, the area is of the Creosote Scrub plant community.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area contains large portions which generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. However, small portions do contain improvements or man-made influences which detract from the apparent naturalness and have been excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Areas. On the east side of Camp Rock Road, approximately seven miles south of Daggett, is the Azucar Mine and a patented mining claim Section 13 (T. 8 N., R. 2 E.). This is a rather large-scale mining operation with several structures and permanent residences. The mine lies in a small bajada surrounded by the Newberry Mountains. The town of Newberry Springs lies at the northern tip of the mountains. Other improvements associated with the town include several rock quarries and small-scale mining around the base of the mountains to the east. A San Bernardino County landfill site is located on the east side of the mountains. Land in the elongated easternmost extension of the area is largely in private ownership. There are several dwellings and a pumping station located in this area, which substantially alter the primeval character of the land. Boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the boundaries of the roadless area west of Newberry Springs and Kane Spring with the exception of the small well-screened bajada at Azucar Mine. The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable here. The eastern boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area diverge from the roadless area boundary at BM 2856, approximately 1½ miles east of Kane Spring, and follow an unimproved way in Kane Wash north to BM 2157. From this point the boundary is drawn northwest through Sections 28, 29, 20, 17, 8, 7, 6 (T. 8 N., R. 3 E.) to the roadless area border approximately ½ mile west of Newberry Springs. These boundaries exclude extensive improvements around Newberry Springs and in the elongated eastern portion of the roadless area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area contains an extensive and complex system of ridges and canyons associated with the Newberry Mountains. These features provide isolation from the sights and sounds of society, as well as visual screening from other visitors. Outstanding opportunities for solitude are available throughout. The challenging topography and the size provide outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The many comments received recognized the natural values of the area, with the vast majority supporting the findings.

AREA 207

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The southern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the northern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet north of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way). To the east, a maintained dirt road used as access to the Silver Bell Mine is the area border. The western boundary is a maintained dirt road between Camp Rock Road and Kane Spring. To the north, the boundary is a gas pipeline maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 69 percent public lands. Non-public holdings occur in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area encompasses the Rodman Mountains and minor alluvial formations at the northern and southern ends. The Rodman Mountains consist of an extensive series of ridges ascending from 2900 to 3000 feet near the northern alluvial slope of the Mojave Valley to 4906 feet on Pipkin Cinder Cone near the southern end of the area. A surrounding lava flow nearly bisects the area from northwest to southeast. This lava forms a mesa gently sloping to the northwest and has cliff-like sides, creating deep canyons along its perimeter. At several points along this perimeter, drainage channels flow over the escarpments, creating spectacular waterfalls during wet seasons. The Creosote Scrub community is represented on the alluvial slopes, while a transitional type, indicating the Joshua Tree Woodland association, is evident at higher elevations. South of Target Peak, the mountains drop sharply to 4200 feet and slope toward Johnson Valley. Several low hills in the far southwest corner of the area seem more closely associated with the northern end of the Fry Mountains than the Rodman Complex.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man-made improvements are present over portions of the area. Large-scale mining activity has occurred in the southwest portion in the area north and west of Camp Rock Mine. These are located in low, scattered, highly eroded hills between the Rodman Mountains and Newberry Mountains and are highly visible scars upon the landscape. A dirt road, which is not maintained, leads to Pipkin Cinder Cone from the base of Target Peak. An abandoned cinder mine is located on the cinder cone. Apparatus associated with the mine still remains. Diggings from the mine are visible and are a major scar, as the disturbed areas have altered the shape and color of the cone. Some random vehicle tracks occur across the lava flow, but not to a degree which would make rehabilitation impracticable. The Pipkin Cinder Cone is excluded along with the western portion from a north-south line through Camp Rock Mine. These are areas where man's work dominates the landscape and have thus been excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Area boundaries. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries along the northern, eastern, and southern borders to Pipkin Cinder Cone. The cone is excluded and the boundary is again common to a point approximately one-half mile east of Camp Rock Mine. The boundary runs north from Camp Rock Mine through a wash and way to the northern boundary one-eighth mile east of BM 2855.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Several aspects of the area enhance outstanding opportunities for solitude. Higher elevations offer outstanding vistas of the Mojave River Valley, Troy Lake depression, Newberry Mountains, Alvord Mountains, Cady Mountains, and the Pisgah Crater and lava beds. The deep canyons provide screening and isolation from other visitors. The topography of this area is varied and scenic, providing oustanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Various degrees of challenge are offered, with areas of geological and historical significance. Surprise Canyon contains many examples of rock art in the form of petroglyphs, as do rocks around the Deep Tank area. Of interest geologically are the cinder cone, lava flow, and eroded cliffs along the perimeter of the volcanic mesa.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments were in agreement with presence of solitude and uniqueness of the terrain.

AREA 207A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area has as its southern and eastern boundaries steel-structure powerline right-of-ways and accompanying maintenance roads. The western boundary is Camp Rock Road, and the northern boundary is a maintained dirt road from Camp Rock Road to Surprise Canyon and further east to connect with the eastern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 70 percent public lands. Non-public holdings occur in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The boundaries encompass Target Peak, the highest portion of the Rodman Mountains, and surrounding alluvium. Scattered low hills south and west of Target Peak are associated with the northern end of the Fry Mountains. The Creosote Bush Scrub community is represented on the alluvium while a transitional type, indicating the Joshua Tree Woodland, is evident at higher elevations.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Large-scale mining activity has occurred in the western portion at Copper Strand Mine and Stark Mine. These are located in the low scattered hills south and west of Target Peak and are highly visible scars upon the landscape. Ways to these apparently abandoned operations further detract from the primeval character and influence of the area. A communications site is located atop Target Peak and is apparent throughout the entire area. The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable throughout the area, making it unsuitable for further wilderness consideration.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities are limited due to the impact of man-made improvements upon the landscape.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment stated the area was not natural.

AREA 208

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the east and north by Camp Rock Road; to the south, by a steel-structure powerline right-of-way. The west boundary is a gas pipeline and maintenance road. A section of the border between the powerline and pipeline is defined by a maintained dirt road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Public lands constitute approximately 65 percent of the area in strip-pattern ownership.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

East Ord Mountain and a one-to-two-mile-wide alluvial slope surrounding it are the dominant physical features of the area. Covering one square mile in the upper right hand corner is a small isolated hill rising approximately 350 feet from the alluvium. Elevations on the alluvium range between 3400 feet and 3800 feet at the southern extreme and from 3800 feet to 4200 feet at the extreme northern end. Alluvium on the west side of the mountain and alluvium from Ord Mountain form an elongated enclosed valley between these mountains, which drains to the southwest. East Ord Mountain rises to 6068 feet from the surrounding alluvium. The mountain is sparsely vegetated with stunted Mojave yucca and a scattering of desert shrubs. Vegetation on the alluvial fans is much denser. Here, healthy Mojave yucca and dense desert shrub of the Joshua Tree Woodland plant community provide complete ground cover. The area is not highly eroded, but maintains relatively smooth, though often steep, contours.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The alluvial formations around the mountain are scarred from formerly maintained roads which were used as access to several mines on the lower slopes of the mountain. These mining operations are apparently inactive, with the exception of the Grandview Mine in the southeastern corner of the area, which is still an active claim. Other mining impacts are found in the interior of the area in the large east-facing canyon just north of the Grandview Mine and at the Maumee Mine in the north end. Impacts from off-road vehicles are also substantially noticeable in the southern end of the area, which is adjacent to the Johnson Valley area designated as "open" to vehicle use.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Man-made improvements are visible from within the area. The area provides some challenges for primitive recreation, although unconfined movement across the area is inhibited by the substantial mining activity. Ongoing activities in and around the roadless area limit opportunities for solitude.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Some comments indicated numerous mining scars and visible evidence of off-road vehicle use. Other comments indicated the area has outstanding primitive recreation potential. The area was dropped from further study as numerous activities and impacts were noted from additional field examinations.

AREA 209

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area's northern boundary is a maintained dirt road accompanying a gas pipeline. The eastern border is two gas pipeline roads. The southern border is a steel-structure powerline, and the western border is adjacent to Area 247.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 40 percent of the area is non-public land scattered throughout in both large and small blocks.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

West Ord Mountain and Goat Mountain are the prominent features of the area. Along the southeastern border is an alluvial terrace sloping generally southwest toward North Lucerne Valley, the southern end of which occupies the south end of the area. The mountains are sparsely vegetated with low desert shrubs and some areas of higher Joshua Tree Woodland dominated by Mojave yucca. At the highest point, the mountain reaches 5525 feet, while the floor of North Lucerne Valley lies at approximately 3000 feet.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable in some areas. North Lucerne Valley is almost entirely in private ownership. Wood pole utility lines and dwellings dot the Valley with associated access roads and other developments which serve to alter the primeval character and influence of the land. In the northwest corner, on Goat Mountain, is a microwave relay tower that is well-screened from most angles. Other alterations of the landscape include heavy mining in the mountains south of Taylor Spring and near Quill Spring. A private dwelling is located about one mile south of Quill Spring. Roads to these sites are apparently maintained. After extensive field investigation, the area was found to contain many portions which have been substantially altered by the works of man. Several working mines with habitations are present and a network of roads dissect the area into confining sections.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Within the mountainous portions, secluded areas provide a strong feeling of isolation; however, the continuous presence of man and his permanent works limit potential for solitude and unconfined movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments indicated the presence of mining and other permanent improvements as well as a high potential for primitive recreation.

AREA 210

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area has very complex borders. Running clockwise around the area, starting from the intersection of Highway 247 and the northern boundary, they are as follows: Highway 247, a steel-structure powerline; Highway 18; a blacktop and graded dirt road into Fairview Valley; a maintained dirt road across the west side of Reed Dry Lake north around Fairview Mountain and west to an intersection with a maintained dirt road which is the northern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is 68 percent public lands with scattered sections of non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the Granite Mountains, Fairview Valley, and portions of North Lucerne Valley and Lucerne Valley. The Granite Mountains and Sidewinder Mountain in 210A are a continuous block of mountains approximately thirteen miles in length and three to six miles in width. Maximum altitude is 5272 feet on Sidewinder Mountain, which is separated from the Granite Mountains by a narrow (4000 feet) pass which is the northern border of Area 210. Several peaks throughout the length of this group of mountains attain altitudes of 4800 feet. The group is made up of decomposed granite and supports a Joshua Tree Woodland plant community on more gentle slopes where exposure and soil depth allow. The valley floors surrounding this block of mountains range in elevation between 3000 feet and 3400 feet. These are extremely flat valleys creating an easily discernible interface between valley and lower mountain slopes. The valleys support a Creosote Scrub plant community.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man-made features significantly alter the primeval character and influence of the land over much of the area, particularly in Fairview Valley. Virtually all of the land in Fairview Valley is in private ownership. The area is no longer affected primarily by the forces of nature. Permanent improvements, such as graded two-lane dirt roads and dense human habitation, are evident throughout the valley. Reed Dry Lake, which is without structures, is altered by the presence of ways which are substantially noticeable. On the east side of the area, several dwellings are located on private land along Highway 247 from Sunset Cove to the intersection with Lucerne Valley Cutoff. In contrast to the valley floors, where man and his own works dominate the landscape, the Granite Mountains constitute an area where the earth and its community of life are undisturbed by man.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are lacking in the valley portions of the area due to the numerous homes and roads. Solitude is also entirely lacking. The mountainous portion does provide opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation though solitude is lacking due to the dense and immediate presence of man on all sides.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were received. The majority indicated that man's presence detracted from wilderness qualities. Others supported inclusion of a small area.

AREA 210A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the west by Central Road, Stoddard Hill Road, and a mining railroad spur; on the north, by a pipeline road right-of-way; on the east, by Lucerne Valley Cutoff and Highway 247; and, on the south by a maintained dirt road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The roadless area is more than 50 percent non-public land although public lands occur mostly in one block.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes Sidewinder Mountain, Black Mountain, and portions of Sidewinder Valley and North Lucerne Valley. The maximum altitude is 5272 feet on Sidewinder Mountain, while elevations on the valley floors range from 3000 to 3400 feet. The mountains consist of decomposed granite and support a Joshua Tree Woodland plant community on more gentle slopes where exposure and soil depth allow.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man-made features significantly alter the primeval character and influence of the land over much of the area, particularly on Black Mountain and the lower northern slopes of Sidewinder Mountain. A railroad spur enters the area from the west to service a rock quarry atop Black Mountain. Maintained access roads and numerous ways in the vicinity of Black Mountain further impact the apparent naturalness. Scattered mining activity is evident on Sidewinder Mountain. In contrast to Black Mountain and the valley floors where man and his works dominate the landscape, a large portion of Sidewinder Mountain is disturbed by man.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area is similar in character to Area 210 to the south, but that portion which retains its natural character is small in size; therefore, opportunities for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received are related to study phase factors.

AREA 211

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is a spur of the Santa Fe Railroad and a large steel-structure powerline. The eastern border is a maintained road through Grapevine Canyon. The western border is a graded road (Bowen Ranch Road) through Arrastre Canyon and Forest Service Road 3N14. The southern boundary is the San Bernardino National Forest.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 80 percent public lands with non-public lands located along the northern border.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of a section of foothills of the northern San Bernardino Mountains and a portion of the south slope of Fifteen Mile Valley between Lucerne Valley and Apple Valley. The foothills consist of rugged canyons and huge boulders and support a Pinyon-Juniper woodland above 4000 feet. Joshua Tree Woodland, some Shadscale Scrub, and Creosote Bush Scrub are encountered below 4000 feet toward the valley floor. Maximum elevation is 5880 feet along Grapevine Canyon road at the National Forest boundary. Lowest elevation in the area is 3200 feet, near the railroad on the northern boundary.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Many roads and ways have been constructed, as have several habitations. One small housing development has 15 to 20 homes. These permanent improvements and human habitations alter the primeval character and influence of the land. The higher areas of the San Bernardino foothills contain several ways among the rugged, heavily wooded canyons and ridges. These ways may receive some hand maintenance as they are used for access to a number of inhabited shacks. The areas immediately surrounding these occupancies have been improved in support of the dwellings, with moderate clearing and outbuildings. Good vegetative and topographic screening serve to isolate these improvements. Small-scale mining activity occurs to a very limited degree, but is substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The valley portion does not contain topographic or vegetative features which would provide screening from intrusions. Opportunities for solitude are limited. Habitation in the area further detracts from opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities. The higher elevations in this roadless area contain canyons, huge assemblages of granite boulders, and good stands of Pinyon and Juniper. However, areas of solitude, and especially areas offering outstanding opportunities for unconfined recreation, are segmented and scattered by the occupancies and associated access roads through the area. Thus, marginal recreational opportunities, coupled with the number of man-made improvements, have eliminated this area from further consideration as to wilderness characteristics.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received were split between support for wilderness study inclusion of the transition area between high desert and mountain plant communities and exclusion due to the presence of improvements.

AREA 212

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is defined along its eastern border by a graded dirt road (Bowen Ranch Road) and a U.S. Forest Service Road. The northern boundary is a steel-structure powerline right-of-way and a network of graded streets as access to habitations along the slopes below Juniper Flat. The western boundary is Deep Creek Road, for ease of definition, but actually is defined by numerous graded dirt roads to dwellings below the Ord Mountains. The southern boundary is the San Bernardino National Forest.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is mostly public lands. Areas around the base of Juniper Flat are totally non-public. Several other non-public sections intrude into the area along Bowen Ranch Road.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of a mesa at approximately 4000 feet to 4600 feet which is vegetated with the Pinyon-Juniper Woodland plant community. The northern and western edges of the mesa drop abruptly through a series of deep canyons to Apple Valley and the Mojave River Valley at approximately 3200 feet. The slope lessens considerably at approximately 3400 feet where numerous housing developments have proliferated. The Joshua Tree Woodland is the common plant community encountered here. The top of the mesa is generally flat, but has many irregularities. Small valleys and hills and several large granite rock formations present a rugged landscape.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man's imprint upon the landscape can be seen throughout much of this area. A large steel-structure powerline splits Juniper Flat from northeast to southwest, but does not have an accompanying maintenance road along its entire route due to the irregular terrain. On the mesa, several ways provide access to virtually all points. Three full sections of private land have human habitation and ranch development with out-buildings. Two other dwellings are located near the northern face of this mesa. The lower slopes below the mesa are heavily developed with street networks and housing tracts. This is an area where man's works dominate the landscape.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are wholly lacking in this area below 3400 feet. On Juniper Flat, good vegetative and topographic screening are available, as is diversity of potential recreation. However, permanent and semi-permanent improvements create a mosaic of both relatively undisturbed areas and areas where the primeval character of the land is not evident. Opportunities for solitude exist in this pattern, but unconfined recreational opportunities are lacking because evidence of man's work is frequently encountered.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments recognize the presence of natural values in portions of the roadless area. The findings recognize this also; however, primitive recreation opportunities could not be considered outstanding.

AREA 213

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The southeastern boundary is a large steel-structure powerline right-of-way and maintenance road. The northern boundary is a maintained dirt road along the west edge of the Pisgah lava flow and a short section of Old National Trails Highway. The western boundary is a maintained dirt road used as access to the Silver Bell Mine.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 60 percent public land. Non-public areas are in strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is primarily composed of a creosote-covered alluvial fan and includes a small section of low hills of the far eastern extent of the Rodman Mountain complex. These mountains slope off to the northeast as does the alluvial fan. The area is relatively small, encompassing 18 square miles.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Mining activity occurs at the edge of the Rodman Mountains at the Silver Cliffs Mine, and is an apparent scar upon the landscape. Elsewhere, the imprints of man's work are substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude are lacking in the area. The flat creosote plain does not have sufficient vegetative screening to provide isolation from other visitors and the limited section of the Rodman Mountains which is included does not contain enough depth in its features to enhance solitude. Recreational diversity is also limited by the even terrain. Outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are not apparent. The adjacent freeway further impairs upon the area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of comments addressed study phase factors.

AREA 214

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This elongated triangular area has as its northern and southeastern boundaries large steel-structure powerline rights-of-way with accompanying maintenance roads. The west boundary is Camp Rock Road. A short two-mile section of Northside Road forms a southern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is 75 percent public land. Non-public sections are in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

From southwest to northeast, the area boundaries include a small portion of Lucerne Valley; the Wilson Hills, an abrupt, rocky ridge oriented northwest to southeast across the area; Anderson Dry Lake, a small playa just north of the Wilson Hills; and scattered low, rugged hills and canyons associated with the north end of the Fry Mountains. With the exception of a small area around Anderson Dry Lake, where the Alkali Sink Scrub plant community is dominant, the Creosote Bush Scrub plant community is the characteristic type encountered. Scattered Mojave yucca and assorted species of cactus are evident in portions of the Fry Mountains. Desert wash plant species are found in the intervening washes among the scattered hills of the northern Fry Mountains.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The principal activity of man within this area is the use of off-road vehicles. BLM has previously designated this area as "open" to use by motorized vehicles. Courses for the dozens of organized competitive events held here annually lace the entire area. The impact is most noticeable on Anderson Dry Lake. This playa retains none of its natural character. Commonly used as a pit and staging area, its formerly smooth surface is now a series of ruts and rolls one-half to three feet in height throughout its length. Scattered mining occurs in the northern Fry Mountains, but it is relatively unnoticeable when compared to the off-road vehicle impacts. This is an area where the works of man dominate the landscape. The forces of nature are no longer the primary forces at work.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The nature of the sparse Creosote Bush Srub vegetation provides little in the way of screening in this area. Likewise, the topography offers little isolation except in relatively small portions of the northern Fry Mountains where washes separate the hills providing small areas of solitude. Opportunities for solitude are not outstanding and are rather limited. Opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely limited also by the frequently encountered areas of intensive off-road vehicle use.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments were general in nature and indicated motorized recreational interest.

AREA 215

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This elongated area has as its long eastern boundary Bessemer Mine Road. The long northwestern border is a large steel-structure powerline right-of-way. The western boundary is Harrod Road and the southern border is Highway 247.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is 62 percent public lands. Non-public sections are concentrated in the southwestern end, with scattered non-public sections in an alternating strip pattern in the northeast one-third.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is approximately 21 miles long and 3 to 8 miles wide. The long axis runs from southwest to northeast. Physical features from south to north include the far eastern end of Lucerne Valley with scattered decomposed granite formations and Negro Butte cinder cone. The valley floor lies generally between 3000 feet and 3200 feet. Beyond the granite formations is Fry Valley with the large playa of Soggy Lake. North of Fry Valley, the volcanic Fry Mountains rise abruptly to over 3800 feet with a large cinder cone at the west end reaching 4335 feet. North of the cinder cone the mountains are reduced to a series of low ridges with several large sandy dissecting washes. Northeast from the Fry Mountains is Upper Johnson Valley which is the only feature for the remaining 11 miles to the northeast corner of the area. The dominant vegetative community is Creosote Bush Scrub, with the exception of the Soggy Lake depression where the Alkali Sink Scrub plant community is evident.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The primary activity of man within this area is the use of off-road vehicles. BLM has previously designated the area as "open" to use by motorized vehicles north from Fry Valley. Courses for the dozens of competitive events held here annually lace the entire area. These impacts are especially noticeable along the north side of Bessemer Mine Road from Soggy Lake to the lowest elevation in Upper Johnson Valley. In these areas, the forces of nature are not the primary forces affecting the landscape. Scattered mining activity occurs in the low hills north of the Fry Mountain cone, but is substantially unnoticeable when compared to the impacts of off-road vehicles use. One inhabited mining claim exists on the south side of Fry Mountain in a privately owned section. A small quarry and minor mineral prospects are evident in the granite formations around Negro Butte. All land south and west of Negro Butte is in private ownership and includes a number of roads and ways which run along section lines. Primeval character and influence have been severely altered throughout this area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The creosote vegetation provides little in the way of screening. The topography offers little isolation except in relatively small portions of the northern Fry Mountains, where washes separate the hills. Solitude is offered in the vastness of Johnson Valley. Opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely limited by the frequently encountered areas of intensive off-road vehicle use.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Few comments related to inventory criteria though some did indicate the presence of many ways.

AREA 216

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This is an extremely large area with irregular boundaries. The short northern border is defined by a steel-structure powerline right-of-way. The long western boundary is defined along its entire length by Bessemer Mine Road. The long eastern boundary is the border of the U.S. Marine Corps Training Center at Twentynine Palms. Highway 247 and the maintained dirt Mikiska Road border the south end of the area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 73 percent public land. A large block of contiguous non-public land is located in the southern one-third of the area. Other non-public sections are scattered in north-south strips of alternating sections in the northern one-half.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

These boundaries encompass all of Johnson Valley and most of Upper Johnson Valley. Elevations of these features range from 2600 feet in the south to 3400 feet in Upper Johnson Valley. The even terrain of these creosote valleys is broken by several large playas, including Melville Lake, Emerson Lake, Means Lake, and Galway Lake. Adding further relief are scattered low ridges and decomposed granite hills rising to 3600 to over 4000 feet in elevation. These hills and playas lie along the eastern half of the area, while the western half is dominated by the large valleys. The Alkali Sink Scrub plant community is well-represented due to the number of dry lakes through the area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

South of Means and Melville Lakes, Johnson Valley is almost entirely in private ownership. This includes approximately 45 square miles where human habitation is apparent. Several ranches have been developed with an associated network of access routes. The remaining 160 square miles is within the Johnson Valley area designated as "open" to vehicle use by BLM. Off-road vehicle use, mining and ranching significantly detract from the primeval character and influence of the land. Means Lake and other sites have been used as military practice targets and are heavily scarred with craters. The apparent naturalness of this area has been generally affected by man's activities, in contrast to other areas where the earth and its community of life are undisturbed by man.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The low profile of the plant communities does not provide vegetative screening in this area. The topography is broken by scattered hills in the eastern half, but not in a continuous manner that provides isolation and seclusion. The hills are low and simple. The tremendous size of the area would be an asset to opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation, but the number of ways and motorcycle trails severely limits these potential opportunities.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments indicated motorized recreational interest in Johnson Valley and the desire of local residents to see this activity stopped. No changes were enacted as a result of the comments.

AREA 217

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded mostly by roads to developments on non-public lands. The only boundary routes not related to homesteads include portions of the paved part of Pipes Canyon Road, portions of Highway 247, and the road to the Akron Silver Reef and Lester Mines. The San Bernardino National Forest RARE II area forms the western boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists almost entirely of public land. Non-public lands are widely scattered and account for less than 10 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area encompasses a wide variety of vegetative and terrain types, ranging from yucca, cactus, and creosote to pinyon-juniper and even ponderosa pine forests. Some of the world's largest Joshua trees are found around the Mound Springs area in the southwest corner. Landforms vary between granitic "boulder piles" and craggy peaks, enclosed interior valleys, and the broad, surrounding, desert bajadas.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The Bighorn Mountains remain affected primarily by the forces of nature and are free from man's impact. Although the area contains many pristine sites and is of sufficient size so as to be undisturbed by man, a few isolated sites do contain the impact of man. Primitive ways are located in some of the canyons, including the canyon that contains Guager Springs. This unimproved route penetrates more than 10 miles into the heart of the area, with numerous branch routes leading to inactive mines and old shacks. The ways presently appear to be maintained solely by the passage of vehicles. Their location, down in the canyon bottoms where they experience periodic washouts, makes the effect on the natural character of the entire area insignificant. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundary along the Forest Service border from the southwest corner of Section 10 (T. 2 N., R. 3 E.), to the Lester Mine and north along the western boundary to Section 2 (T. 3 N., R. 2 E.). The boundary continues east to the Rattlesnake Spring Road and continues just south of Rattlesnake Spring and Two Hole Spring along the base of the mountains through Sections 16, 15, 14, 23, 24, (T. 3 N., R. 3 E.); Sections 19, 30, 29, 28, 27, 26, 35, 36, (T. 3 N., R. 4 E.) and Sections 6, 5, 4, 9, 10, 15, 21, 28, 33 (T. 2 N., R. 5 E.). The boundary encircles Flat Top and Black Lava Butte excluding non-public Sections 24, 25, 36 (T. 2 N., R. 4 E.). The boundary continues through Sections 13, 14, 15 (to exclude Parson Ranch), 22, 27, 34, 33, 32, 31, 30 (T. 2 N., R. 4 E.); and Sections 25, 24, 14, 15 (to exclude the Mound Spring area, T. 2 N., R. 3 E.). These boundaries encompass a large area where the works of man are substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The variety of terrain and vegetation offers unlimited amounts of secluded areas where a visitor can have outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area's topographical and vegetative diversity also provide outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. In addition, the adjacent San Bernardino National Forest RARE II area provides adjacent features of interest.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A variety of comments are on file. Many indicated ongoing uses and private land which have now been excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Area boundary, where detected. Many comments recognized the natural values noted in the findings.

AREA 217A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the north and south by the graded Burns Canyon and Pipes Canyon Roads. The eastern border is the paved Pioneertown Road. The western border is the San Bernardino National Forest.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area comprises 50 percent public lands and 50 percent non-public lands in a checkerboard pattern. As a result of this land ownership pattern, the area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and the public tracts are not of sufficient size to make practicable their preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments recognized the presence of natural values in the roadless area. An adjacent and proposed RARE II Area in the San Bernardino National Forest was eliminated from further consideration by the U.S. Forest Service. This, and lack of contiguous ownership deleted this area from further wilderness study.

AREA 218

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the north by the graded Pipes Canyon Road and the paved Pioneertown Road; to the east, by Highway 62; to the south, by a U.S. Forest Service fire access road from lower Mission Creek Canyon to upper Whitewater Canyon; and, to the west, by the San Bernardino National Forest RARE II Area.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Most of the area falls within a zone of checkerboard public/non-public land ownership.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Various landform and vegetation types are represented in this area, which contains a portion of the eastern slope of the San Bernardino Mountains. Landforms range from low, rolling "foothills" to steep rugged mountains, while vegetation ranges from Mojave yucca, Joshua tree, creosote, and mixed shrubs, through pinyon-juniper and on up into yellow pine forest. Several deep canyons cut into the eastern flank of the mountains, each containing water in the form of springs and, at least in the winter, small creeks. The sites of the springs are easily recognized by their stands of cottonwood trees.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Areas affected by man have been deleted from the central area meeting wilderness criteria. These areas include: Kee Ranch, Pioneer Town, Yucca Valley, Little Morongo Heights, Little Morongo Drive, Pierce Ranch, Sherman Road, Morongo Valley, Canyon House Ranch, T Cross K Ranch, Mission Creek Road; and all private land. The small central portion has been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. This nine-section area contains no private land or permanent improvements. This area includes Section 36 (T. 1 N., R. 3 E.); Sections 31 and 32 (T. 1 N., R. 4 E.); Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, the north and east three quarters of Section 7, the north and west three quarters of Section 9, the north half of 10, the northwest one quarter of 18, the north half of 17, the northwest one quarter of 16, and the southwest one quarter of the southwest quarter of 2, all in (T. 1 S., R. 4 E.).

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Terrain and vegetative diversity provide outstanding opportunities for solitude by providing numerous areas of seclusion. This diversity also provides outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comment is overwhelmingly in favor of the entire roadless area receiving wilderness status due to the ecological and geological diversity and the location adjacent to both RARE II and existing wilderness lands. Most recent comments urge land exchanges to solve the land ownership problem.

AREA 218A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the south by Interstate 10; to the north, by a U. S. Forest Service fire access road between lower Mission Creek and upper Whitewater Canyon; to the east, by Highway 62; and, to the west, by the San Bernardino National Forest RARE II Area. A road through lower Whitewater Canyon to a fish hatchery penetrates the area from the south.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is predominantly public lands. Non-public lands, which account for approximately 35 percent of the entire area, occur mostly on the southern and eastern edges of the roadless area and in Whitewater Canyon as solid blocks.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Various landforms and vegetation types are represented in this area, which contains a portion of the eastern slope of the San Bernardino Mountains. Landforms range from broad bajadas at the eastern edge of the area to steep, rugged mountains in the interior. Vegetation ranges from yucca, creosote, and mixed scrubs through Pinyon-Juniper and on up into Yellow Pine forest. Several creeks flow through the area in steep-walled canyons and, at least in the upper elevations, many flow all year around. The Whitewater River and Mission Creek are examples of these year-round streams. In the Whitewater Canyon, highly eroded and colorful ridges protrude above the stark whiteness of the boulder-strewn canyon floor. Various locations throughout the area also offer excellent views of the rugged, near-vertical slopes of nearby San Jacinto Peak.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area, which appears dominated by natural forces, exhibits an overall undeveloped, primeval character. Due to terrain and vegetative variation, it is insulated from the effects of nearby man-made features, such as the homesteads and highways located at the southern and eastern edges of the area. The boundaries of the area at

Wilderness Study Area have been adjusted to exclude non-public land and impacts of the homesteads and other developments. The resulting southern boundary skirts the southern edges of Sections 31 through 33, then follows the cliff-tops to a point north of the fish hatchery in lower Whitewater Canyon, and then east through Sections 13 and 14 to the eastern edge of the roadless area. The eastern boundary follows the eastern edge of T. 25, R. 3 E. until it meets the Mission Creek Road on the north. Some non-public land inholdings and primitive roads do penetrate the area, as do a few old mining scars; however, man's influence remains substantially unnoticeable as a result of the topographical and vegetative screening.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Topographical and vegetative diversity provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation through a screening effect. In addition, views to the adjacent RARE II area enhances opportunities to experience both solitude and spaciousness. The availability of water greatly enhances most primitive recreation opportunities. The routing of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail through this area provides further opportunities for primitive recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most of the comment received on this area favors its inclusion as a Wilderness Study Area based upon ecological and geological diversity, as well as a location adjacent to a RARE II area and near the existing San Gorgonio Wilderness. One comment received dealt with potential conflict with a proposed flood control drain site which would be located within the Wilderness Study Area. This proposal is a study, and not an inventory, factor.

AREA 219

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is paralleled by a mining access and radio tower road; the eastern boundary by Highway 127; the southern boundary by a mining access road; and, the western boundary by Death Valley National Monument.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area consists primarily of public lands with one square mile, centrally located, being non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes mountains, sand hills, and creosote-covered bajadas.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. Some active mining claims and mines are found in both the northern and southern portion and are substantially noticeable in the immediate area; however, the administratively-endorsed wilderness area in Death Valley National Monument is adjacent. Therefore, the area has been included for further consideration.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited by restrictive size. Active mine operations one mile west of the Death Valley National Monument boundary tend to have a confining effect on freedom of movement. However, the roadless area has been retained because of the adjacent administratively-endorsed wilderness area in the National Monument.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received supported inclusion of the area.

AREA 220

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the north by a mining access road; on the east by Highway 127; on the south by the Saratoga Springs Road; and, on the west, by the administratively-endorsed wilderness in Death Valley National Monument.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The small area consists primarily of public land with one square mile, located in the southern portion of the area, being non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This small area is almost entirely level and covered predominantly with creosote vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. A patented mining claim in the far northwestern corner has been excluded.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited by the restrictive size of this immediate area. Active mine operations one mile west of the Death Valley National Monument boundary tends to have a confining effect on freedom of movement. However, the roadless area has been retained because of the adjacent administratively-endorsed wilderness area in the National Monument.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received referred to mineral potential in the area, and challenged the evaluation of areas less than 5000 acres in size. Others supported further wilderness consideration due to the adjacency of administratively-endorsed wilderness areas.

AREA 221

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the north by Death Valley National Monument and a graded road from the Monument east to Highway 127 at Salt Creek; on the east by Highway 127; on the south by Silver Lake Road and a portion of a utility corridor; and on the west by the Fort Irwin Military Reservation and an improved road through Avawatz Pass used by the military.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area includes approximately 12 sections of non-public land which are distributed throughout the area and account for approximately 10 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of the large mountain mass of the Avawatz Mountains which contain many colorful eroded slopes, rugged ridges and steep-walled narrow canyons. These mountains are surrounded by a steeply descending creosote-covered bajada which transforms into a dry lake near Highway 127. White talc deposits dot the landscape at intervals, and the northern portion provides outstanding views into Death Valley National Monument.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The majority of the area retains its primeval character and influence and appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature with man's work substantially unnoticeable. Areas where man's work were substantially noticeable were excluded: (1) the

Sheep Creek Springs area in the north for extensive open-pit talc mining operations, a house, four small cement foundations, an outhouse, and associated roads and ways; (2) the extreme southwest corner where extensive openpit mine operations degrade and reduce the natural appearance of the landscape through bulldozer scrappings, tailings and associated roads; (3) a circular quarter-mile track of pavement, adjacent to Highway 127 in section 19, (T. 16 N., R. 8 E.); (4) the graded south Mormon Springs Road and the area around the Chinaman Mine in Sections 1 and 2 (T. 16 N., R. 6 E.), due to bulldozing and mining scars; (5) a graded road, 1 mile east of, and paralleling, the Sheep Creek Spring Road into the Avawatz Mountains, and associated mining operations; and (6) in the extreme southeast corner, a State Department of Transportation paved pull-out in section 16, (T. 15 N., R. 8 E.) and mining activity (scrapes and road cuts) in the low hills there. The area west of Avawatz Pass Road contains evidence of mining activities scattered throughout. Several primitive ways penetrate the area but are insignificant due to their vegetative regrowth and repeated washouts. Another way extends up to the Old Mormon Springs from Highway 127. This way is substantially unnoticeable from a majority of the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are available. Spaciousness on the mountain peaks and large bajadas, combined with vistas into Death Valley National Monument, complement the numerous opportunities for solitude found in the narrow canyons and rugged mountain ridges which screen visitors from one another. The area also provides for unconfined movement and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Those comments relative to the inventory dealt with the improper omission of roads to active mines within the Avawatz Mountains and with the area's wilderness qualities. After further field checks, changes were made where appropriate.

AREA 221A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular area has as its northern boundary Silver Lake Road. The southern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the northern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet north of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way). The western boundary is the Camp Irwin Military Reservation.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 95 percent public lands. The non-public holdings consist of two separate undeveloped sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The boundaries encompass a large bajada of coarse gravel and scattered boulders criss-crossed throughout by many graveled washes. This large bajada slopes generally east from 1400 feet near the southern Avawatz Mountains to less than 900 feet at the eastern limit of the area. The southern end of the Avawatz Mountains occupy the western end of the area rising abruptly to maximum elevation of 3262 feet. The Creosote Bush Scrub is the dominant plant community throughout.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is largely untrammeled by man throughout. An area of light mining operations has been excluded at the northwest corner and along the extreme southwest edge. Another road used for access to a transmission tower also has been excluded in the southwest corner. Patented mining claims have been excluded in Section 12 and 13 (T. 14 N., R. 6 E.) and Section 18 and 19 (T. 15 N., R. 7 E.). The narrow strip between Fort Irwin and the utility corridor were excluded because of the width being less than one-half mile. With these exceptions, the imprint of man is substantially unnoticeable or entirely absent within the boundaries. The entire area remaining retains its primeval character and influence.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are found within the roadless area. The canyons and washes within the southern Avawatz Mountains provide topographic screening and separation into enclosed spaces. Outside of the mountains, large areas are visible from the bajada including the Soda Mountains and the Avawatz Mountains. The unbroken view of these large features provides a psychological feeling of vastness and outstanding opportunities for solitude. The diversity of terrain within the area provides outstanding opportunities for a variety of forms of primitive recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments supported the findings.

AREA 222

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This extremely large area is located about 15 miles north and east of the town of Baker. The western boundary is a combination of Highway 127; a dirt road just east of Renoville, running southeast to connect with a dirt road running southwest across Silurian Dry Lake to Highway 127; and, the triangular shaped roads joining at the Riggs site. The southern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the northern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet north of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way). The northern boundary is the combination of the Excelsior Mine Road which passes through Tecopa Pass and the town of Tecopa; the graded road from Mine Camp, southwest of Tecopa and running 2.5 miles southeast to elevation 2465; and, the graded dirt road from elevation 2465 running a mile north to elevation 2284 at the Excelsior Mine Road. The eastern boundary is a combination of the Excelsior Mine Road and a water line and tank maintenance road in Kingston wash.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This large area consists primarily of public land with approximately 6 percent in scattered blocks of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area has an extremely diverse terrain, including the steep Kingston Mountains, the Shadow Mountains, the Dumont Hills, the Silurian Hills, the Valjean Valley, the Dumont Dunes, and the western top of the Ibex Mountains. The rugged Kingston Mountains are the highest mountains in the area and display the largest variety of colors. A bajada slopes south from the Kingston Mountain Range and leads to the Kingston wash. The Shadow Mountains have smooth ridges and rounded peaks with gentle interior canyons and numerous erosion channels. The Dumont Hills have a soft rolling topography, with numerous small interior valleys, located west of the Kingston Mountains. The Silurian Hills also have a soft rolling topography. Between the Kingston Range and the Silurian Hills is a very large interior valley called Valjean Valley, which is virtually flat. Located along Highway 127 are the Dumont Dunes, a relatively large sand dune system rising some six to eight hundred feet from the valley floor. Just north of the Dunes is the Amargosa River, which has surface running water most of the year. North of the river is the western tip of the Ibex Mountains. This zone has flat-top mountains, laced with numerous rocky, steep-walled canyons, developed from continual erosion in volcanic rock. The vegetation of this area is as diverse as the landform and changes primarily with elevation. In the washes, interior valleys, and at the base of the mountains, are a variety of low desert shrubs with creosote being the dominant plant. In the higher interior valleys there are Joshua trees, yucca, barrel cactus, and cholla. Above the high interior valleys, on the steep mountain sides, there is a Pinyon Pine-Juniper forest, which finally leads to a White Fir forest at the highest elevations in the Kingston Mountains.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area contains areas both disturbed and undisturbed by man. The following areas along the perimeter have been excluded from further wilderness consideration because they do not meet criteria established by the Wilderness Act: (1) The southwestern side of the Silurian Hills because of extensive silver and talc mining operations and associated scars, roads and ways, including the Rigg, Talc, Silver Lake and S.S. Mines; (2) An improved way from Highway 127, at Renoville, to the Eastern Star Mine, Kingston Spring and a patented mine at Section 30 (T. 18 N., R. 10 E.); (3) The Dumont Dunes, a BLM-designated "open area," where extensive vehicular use is evident in the area in the form of vehicle tracks, ways and an absence of vegetation; (4) Portions of the Spring Hills and the bajada north and west of them for ORV scars, ways, mining scars, the Dumont Dunes entrance road, and a ranch house complex and road in Section 36, (T. 18 N., R. 6 E.); (5) A paved highway maintenance circle approximately one mile south of the Ibex Spring Road, east of Highway 127; (6) An area just south of Ibex Pass for the old paved route of Highway 127 and a wood pole utility line and associated road; (7) The extreme northwest corner of the area in the vicinity of McLain Park for mining operations and scars; (8) The areas south of the Excelsior Mine Road from Tecopa to approximately five miles south east of Horse Thief Springs for the town of Tecopa, the China Ranch and road and patented mining in Section 33, 34, 35, 36, 26, and 27 (T. 20 N., R. 7 E.), the town of Mine Camp southeast of Tecopa Pass, a waterline road, a house and associated facilities at Horse Thief Springs, a water tank, a corral, fire break, extensive mining operations and associated roads, ways, buildings, tunnels, pits, scars, and locations of the patented Western Talc, Smith, ACME and Omega Mines and other patented mines in Section 33 - 35 (T. 20 N., R. 8 E.) and Section 3, 4, 12 and 13 (T. 19 N., R. 8 E.); (9) The road leading west off the Excelsior Mine Road to the Horse Thief Mine and its associated talc mine operations; (10) An improved fence line road heading west off the Excelsior Mine Road to the southern edge of the Kingston Range; (11) The abandoned Shadow Mountain Mine because of extensive bulldozing scars, mine shafts, slag piles and associated structures; (12) A road running north off the southern boundary into the Shadow Mountains for its associated mines and roads. The remaining area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable. There are a few primitive ways south of the Kingston Mountains in the bajada, none of which detract from the naturalness of the area. The old Tonapah-Tidewater Railroad bed runs in a north-south direction through this area and is of historical significance. The Sperry Wash Road also runs through the northern portion of the area. It is unmaintained from the northern edge of the Dumont Dunes area to the Western Talc Mine. Within this area it runs through a wash and has an insignificant effect upon the naturalness of the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of the extreme diversity in both terrain and plant type, those portions of the area which meet wilderness criteria have outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area has substantial topographical and vegetational screening and is of such a great size as to be able to keep visitors apart. In addition to solitude, outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are also available because of the diversified vegetation and terrain.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments directed to the inventory included: (1) a map correction for the location of Baker; (2) statements on unnatural areas that have been excluded; (3) agreement on the naturalness of the area meeting wilderness criteria; (4) questions on the validity of deletions. The area has been extensively field checked to verify public comments. A few minor boundary changes have been made.

AREA 222A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is the dirt road from Highway 127 running east to Riggs. The northeast boundary is the graded road from the Riggs Road to the Silver Lake Mine. The eastern boundary is the dirt road running south from the Silver Lake Mine Road, one and one-quarter miles to Riggs Wash. The southern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the northern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet north of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way). The western boundary is Highway 127.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 5 percent of this area is non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes approximately 27 sections of land with about eight sections of rocky, rolling hills in the southeast portion. The Riggs Wash runs through the northeast corner of the area. A large creosote-covered bajada makes up the remainder.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is primarily affected by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. One minor exception is an unimproved way heading northeast from the southwest corner of the area, for approximately two miles, to an abandoned mining tunnel. The way has little effect upon the naturalness of the area due to the revegetation. The deserted Tonopah-Tidewater Railroad bed runs through the area, but is of historic significance.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the extensive bajada, large rolling hills and naturalness, opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are outstanding. Outstanding opportunities for solitude are available in the small mountainous region of the south.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

This is a new area, separated from Area 222 by the addition of mining roads; therefore, no comments have been received.

AREA 223

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The west boundary is the Excelsior Mine Road. The south boundary is the Kingston Road. The north boundary is a road that branches east from the Excelsior Mine Road, goes south by the Snow White Mine, and turns south to meet the Kingston Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains four sections, or approximately 10 percent, non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is located north of the Mesquite Mountains and contains interesting portions of geological features and vegetative types. The southwestern portion contains a gradually sloping bajada which is covered with a variety of vegetative species, such as creosote, Joshua trees, yucca, assorted varieties of cacti, and several desert shrub and native grass species. Further north, a cluster of mountains and medium-sized buttes spread to the north and east, changing into steep, rugged mountains. This area contains a relatively small cove garden containing various species of cacti, an extensive, dense stand of Joshua trees, and assorted desert shrubs and native grasses. The eastern portion contains a wide horseshoe-shaped valley that is almost completely surrounded to the south by the rugged mountains and to the west and north by lower foothills. Creosote covers the entire valley, except for the small island in the middle. Scattered portions of cacti, desert shrub, native grasses, and isolated Joshua trees are also found. The northern and western portions contain a limited variety of terrain. Rolling brown foothills with a few steeper mountains in the western portion comprise the major reddish brown geologic features. The vegetation is dominated by creosote supported by desert shrub species, cacti, and isolated stands of Joshua trees.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The imprint of man's work is evident in a small portion of the northern one-third of the area. This occurs in the form of abandoned mining activity in Sections 31 (T. 18 N., R. 12 E.) and unsurveyed Section 11 (T. 19 N., R. 11 E.). Roads to these mining areas have been excluded from the areas possessing wilderness characteristics. This activity is in a relatively localized area and is of little impact to overall naturalness. A short, well-maintained road following a grazing allotment fence penetrates the area from the West and has also been excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Area. Elsewhere, the works of man are substantially unnoticeable. The primeval character of the land is retained in the area suited for wilderness study.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area's size, shape, diversity of geological landforms and vegetation all contribute to an outstanding opportunity for solitude. In addition, outstanding opportunities for a primitive type of recreation are found in the diverse landforms of the area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments were in support of the findings.

AREA 224

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western and southern boundary is a graded mining road; the eastern boundary, a graded road and the California/Nevada state border; the northern boundary, the Kingston Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 35 percent of the area is non-public land, most of which is located in the northern portion, with an isolated section in the southwestern portion.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The area includes Mesquite Dry Lake, which is almost completely encircled by mesquite trees and has a few sand dunes along the eastern edge. Gradually sloping bajadas, which are dominated by low-growing creosote, spread out to the east, south, and west from the Lake. Other isolated portions of desert plant species, such as Mojave yucca, annual grasses, forbs, buckhorn, jumping cholla, hedgehog, red barrel, and beavertail cacti can also be found.

IV. NATURAL CONDITIONS

There is a corral, a windmill, and fences in the southern and eastern portions of this area. The northern portion contains several residences on private lands. There are also telephone lines and roads into these homes which dominate the northern non-public portion in spite of the mesquite trees within this area. These man-made improvements seriously degrade the primeval character of the landscape, and were omitted from the portion that still retains its primeval character. The remaining portion of the area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area is essentially flat and lacks sufficient topographic and vegetative screening for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Surrounding and encroaching development have somewhat of a confining effect on the visitor.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments referred to the presence of wilderness characteristics in some portions of the roadless area while other comments pointed out man's influence upon the landscape. Further field evaluation was not warranted.

AREA 225

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular area is bordered on the northeast by the Old Traction Road; on the east, by the graded road for the Umberci Mine. The southern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the northern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet north of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way), and, on the west, by the Kingston Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site includes approximately 6 sections of non-public land scattered throughout the area and accounting for approximately 10 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains both a portion of the Mesquite Mountain and the Clark Mountain Range. The western portion of the Mesquite Range has more gradual rising slopes than does the abrupt and steep eastern face. The Clark Mountain Range, which crosses the southeastern corner of this area, is rough and rocky with numerous small caves in the porous rock. Bajadas and the southern extremity of Mesquite Valley are an integral part of this area. Extensive stands of Joshua trees, yuccas, cactus, and annuals grow on the western portion, while Creosote Bush Scrub is the dominant plant in Mesquite Valley.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The majority of this area is affected primarily by the forces of nature with man's work substantially unnoticeable. A way bisects this area over Mesquite Pass, once used for access to an airway beacon. A small cement foundation exists where the beacon once existed. The way and foundation have minimal impact upon the area as they are relatively insignificant and visible from only a small portion of the area. The eastern edge has mining exclusions at: the State Line Mine, for a house, cement shed, mining tunnel, and associated road; along the first 2.5 miles of the northern access to the Umberci Mine, for open pit mining and associated roads.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the relatively large size and conformity of this area, combined with numerous narrow canyons, rough rock ridge, and, in places, thick stands of Joshua tree and yucca, opportunities for solitude are outstanding. This area also contains diverse topographic features which add to the outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Those comments specific to inventory considerations involved agreement with values mentioned in the findings, but disagreed with road determinations. These roads were field-checked and no changes on their designation were necessary.

AREA 225A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the northeast by the State Line Pass Road; on the north by the Old Traction Road; and, on the west by the graded road for the Umberci Mine. The southern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the northern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet north of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way).

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area consists entirely of public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This is a rough, rocky, isolated section of the Clark Mountain Range which includes a myriad of small caves and openings in the porous rock. Vegetation is sparse in this area, with creosote and yucca scattered around the base of the range.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area is primarily affected by the forces of nature with man's work substantially unnoticeable. Mining exclusions have been made along the western border at the Umberci Mine and along the associated road. A primitive way is located in the southeast corner but the effect upon the naturalness of the area is insignificant.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the rugged character of this portion of the Clark Mountain Range and related caves and canyons, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation can be easily found.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments stated the area merited wilderness study status. The area was rechecked and found to meet the Wilderness Act criteria except for mining exclusions.

AREA 226

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the north by a transmission line corridor right-of-way and access road; on the west and south, by a mining/ranching access road; and, on the east, by wood pole utility line roads and the California/Nevada state border.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists primarily of public land, with approximately 6 percent of the area being scattered blocks of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes a portion of the Clark Mountain Range, a bajada, and a small segment of Ivanpah Dry Lake. Some scattered Pinyon-Juniper grow on the higher elevations, but vegetation is sparse on the bajada and is nearly nonexistent on the dry lake.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has received heavy mining activity which includes bulldozer scars, numerous buildings and facilities, tailing dumps, and a multitude of roads and ways. Man's work has substantially altered the appearance of this roadless area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely limited by the restrictive and confining nature of man's activities on the land.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received challenged the exclusion of the area from further wilderness study. Additional field examinations made in and around the area supported the original findings due to extensive mining operations and effects.

AREA 227

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the southern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet south of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way). The boundary on the west is a blacktop road between Valley Wells and the north transmission line; on the south, a steel-structure powerline right-of-way and ranching and mining roads; and, on the east, a bulldozed mining road between Antimony Gulch and the Colosseum Gorge road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site includes approximately five sections of non-public land. These sections are scattered throughout the area and account for approximately 7 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes the biologically unique Clark Mountain (7900 feet). Various forms of cactus, agave, yucca, Joshua tree, pinyon pine, juniper, and a remnant population of white fir on Clark Mountain's summit are all found within this area. Wildlife is highly varied and includes deer. The mountain mesa contains steep-walled, colorful rock formations which combine with the vegetation to create a unique desert mountain ecosystem. The terrain surrounding Clark Mountain includes rolling, rugged hills, narrow canyons and steeply sloping and open bajadas dissected with desert washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Clark Mountain and the western bajada generally appear to be affected primarily by the forces of nature. Some old mines and mine structures are found within this portion of the area but these man-introduced features add to the historical value of the land. Areas where man's work is substantially noticeable have been excluded from further wilderness consideration. A stock water tank and active mine operation with related equipment and a mobile home are found along the northwest border. Heavy and active mine operations which include bulldozer scraping, tailing dumps, buildings and equipment are found in the Collosseum Gorge area, Ivanpah Springs area, and Mohawk and Mountain Pass Mine areas. The road into Pachalka Springs has also been excluded because of private ownership. The potential Wilderness Study Area boundaries proceed along the north side of the road to Pachalka Spring across the lower portion of Section 31 to exclude the Copper World Mine. It proceeds south along the Copper World Mine road to the 5000 feet contour line in Section 5, joining the south roadless area boundary at the west edge of Section 9. The boundary follows the powerline to Antimony Gulch in Section 2 but excludes access to the park area in Sections 33 and 34. The potential Wilderness Study Area boundary is common with the roadless area boundary to the Benson Mine road in the center of Section 25. The boundary runs northwest along the road to Benson Mine extending further northwest to exclude shafts and access in the northwest and southeast corners of Section 22 and joining the northern roadless area boundary one-half mile west of Green's Well. It is common with the roadless area boundary into the northwest corner of Section 17 and follows a way, which shows no evidence of recent maintenance or continuous use but is a major scar, to Section 28 on the western roadless area boundary. This excludes a width approximately one and one-half miles along the northern boundary where a dwelling, mining scars, and access routes are apparent.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are outstanding due to the diversity and variety of both topographic and vegetative types. Thick stands of evergreen and conifers in this area, which includes rough, steep-walled mountainous countryside, adds to the areas's ability to screen visitors from one another.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments reflected the many values in the area. Many roads and mining areas were delineated and rechecked in the field. All known active mining claims and roads have been excluded, where warranted. A large number of comments challenged road evaluations in the findings, indicating that the potential Wilderness Study Area should be expanded due to the unique qualities of mountain interior areas.

AREA 228

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The unit is located northeast of Baker. The northern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the southern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet south of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way); to the west by Highway 127 and a road just east of Baker, to the south by a wood pole utility line that parallels Interstate 15, and to the east by a road to a cabin and well at Cree Camp and an improved dirt road leading northwest to the powerline road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists primarily of public land, with approximately 5 percent non-public lands in scattered parcels.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of this area varies from flat to gently sloping bajada, then to low rolling hills and gentle mountains. The bajada is interlaced with washes, and slopes to the west towards Silver Dry Lake. Low rolling hills lead to the western Turquoise Mountains, a gentle range of mountains having smooth ridges and rounded peaks. Vegetation is dominated by creosote, while desert holly and other low desert shrubs and annual grasses are scattered throughout. Plant density is fairly uniform throughout the area with the exception of the western edge, where the vegetation becomes smaller and more sparse.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area generally retains its primeval character and influence, man's works being substantially unnoticeable. A small exclusion has been made around a road leading to the Jumbo Mine from Cree Camp Road. The remainder of the area is affected primarily by the forces of nature. There are no permanent structures in the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area's washes, hills and mountains insure areas where outstanding opportunities for solitude are available. Because of the topographical and vegetative diversity, and because of the naturalness of the area, outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation exist.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments relating to the inventory dealt primarily with man's influence outside the proposed wilderness study area or expressed agreement with the draft descriptive narrative; some questioned parameters of the roadless area by questioning the definition of a road used to establish the boundaries. The Cree Camp Road has been added after further field checking.

AREA 228A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located northeast of the town of Baker. The northern boundary is a powerline corridor right-of-way and associated access road. The eastern boundary is Cima Road. The southern boundary is a powerline corridor right-of-way and associated access road that parallels Highway 15 between Halloran Spring and Cima Roads. The western boundary is in three sections: a wood pole utility line right-of-way; the paved road to the Turquoise Mountain Microwave Relay Station; and, the improved dirt road leading northeast from the relay station road to the powerline corridor right-of-way.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists primarily of public lands, with approximately 5 percent non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the eastern two-thirds of Squaw Mountains. A series of buttes and hills make up the southeast portion of the area. Shadow Valley encloses the eastern one-third of this roadless area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has been adversely affected by man. Permanent improvements are seen throughout the area and detract from the naturalness. For example: Shadow Valley has several roads and ways leading to a variety of water tanks used for cattle grazing and easily seen when traveling; Great Wanamingo Mine, the Pomona Mine, and a variety of unnamed mines are scattered throughout the buttes and Squaw Mountain with white slag left behind and easily seen from long distances. Numerous roads, ways and scrappings are associated with the mines. A small mining community of mobile homes is located in the area of the Pomona Mine.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of the permanent improvements by man, extensive mining, numerous roads and ways, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited. The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Although all comments received indicated that the southern part of this area should be included as meeting the 2(c) criteria, two additional field checks failed to support that contention.

AREA 228B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary of this area is a major powerline road right-of-way; the western boundary is the Cree Camp Road; the southern boundary is a wood pole utility line; the eastern boundary is a combination of a paved road from the Halloran Springs turnoff that leads to a relay station on Turquoise Mountain, a wood pole utility line road, and an improved dirt road leading northwest to the powerline road right-of-way.

II. LAND STATUS

The area consists primarily of public land, with approximately 5 percent non-public lands in scattered parcels.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes Turquoise Mountain and Squaw Mountain. There are also numerous hills. Vegetation consists primarily of Creosote, Yucca, and other low desert shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The marks of man are evident within this area. The area east of Cree Camp Road contains some ways and there are bulldozing scars around Hyten's Well. The Turquoise Mountain area contains numerous roads, ways and a microwave relay station, and wood pole utility lines. The Turquoise Mining area contains open-pit mines, patented. An airway beacon is located just south of Squaw Mountain and there are some signs of vehicle activity in the area. There is also a shack and a billboard in the southeast corner of the area. The area as a total is not natural.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of the areas man-made works outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments relating to the inventory dealt primarily with the area's unnatural condition.

AREA 229

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located east of Ivanpah Dry Lake, abutting the Nevada state border. The area is small and triangular, with the southern boundary being Nipton Road. The western boundary is the Nipton Desert Road, which parallels the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The eastern boundary is the California/Nevada state border.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This small area consists entirely of public lands, except for a very small area near the town of Nipton.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The uniform terrain of this area is a gently sloping bajada. The bajada leads from the McCullough Mountains in Nevada to Ivanpah Dry Lake, and is laced with a few shallow washes. The vegetation of this area is very sparse low desert shrub, with annual plants being the dominant flora of the area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This small, elongated area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature. It has no permanent improvements by man.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area is small, flat, and has low desert vegetation. The elongated shape, adjacent railroad, and extremely small size do not provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments discussed inventory criteria.

AREA 230

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area includes Ivanpah Dry Lake and is in the shape of a triangle. The southern boundary is Nipton Road. The western boundary is a pipeline right-of-way and associated access road that parallels Interstate 15. The eastern boundary is the Union Pacific Railway and associated access road, which includes the Nipton Desert Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area consists primarily of public lands, with approximately 3 percent being non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area basically has a uniform flat terrain. Two gently-sloping bajadas, one from the east and one from the west, lead into Ivanpah Dry Lake. The bajadas are laced with small, shallow washes that drain toward the Lake. The Lake is completely flat and is covered totally with sand. There is sparse vegetation, mostly low desert shrub, located on the bajadas, with the dominant plant being creosote. Associated with the shrubs are a variety of annual plants. Around the edge of the Lake are a few varieties of grasses, but the Lake itself is barren of vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area displays permanent improvements by man in the form of roads, ways, cattle ranching, and off-road vehicle use. Two roads lead into the Dry Lake. From these roads, numerous ways spread throughout the Lake. In the south end of the Dry Lake are corrals and fences used by cattle ranchers. Throughout the area, there is evidence of unrepairable scars from off-road vehicle use. Because of these conditions, the area no longer appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of the flat terrain and lack of vegetation, outstanding opportunities for solitude are limited. Without topographical or vegetational screening, visitors can easily see each other, even when long distances apart. Outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are also limited, because of the numerous permanent improvements.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment supported further study for the area.

AREA 231

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located west of the town of Cal-Neva, adjacent to Interstate 15. The southern boundary is Interstate 15; the eastern boundary, a powerline right-of-way and access road; the western boundary, Mountain Pass Road; and, the northern boundary, a major utility corridor.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area consists primarily of public land, with approximately 9 percent being non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is primarily an alluvial fan that slopes east from the Clark Mountains. The area also includes the very southern edge of the Clark Mountains, located east of Mountain Pass. The gently sloping alluvial fan is laced with shallow erosional channels that drain into Ivanpah Lake, causing the terrain to appear virtually flat. The southern edge of the Clark Mountains is relatively rugged, reaching elevations above 5,000 feet. There are numerous small canyons and washes in the range which give it a semi-rough appearance. Vegetation is primarily low desert shrub, with Creosote Bush Scrub being the dominant plant community. The desert shrub is relatively dense in the alluvial fan and at the base of the mountains, but becomes more sparse in higher elevations.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This small area has evidence of man's impact. The southern edge of the Clark Mountains is scattered with current and abandoned mining activity, including the Antimony, Birthday, and Mountain Pass mines. These mines display extensive bulldozing and slag piles, which are easily seen. The alluvial fan is laced with numerous access roads and ways. All of the permanent improvements mentioned above detract from the naturalness of the area. The area does not fit criteria established by the Wilderness Act.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are limited in this area because of its relatively small size, primarily flat terrain, and low desert vegetation. Without vegetational or topographical screening, the area is not large enough to separate visitors. Outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are also limited. Users of this area would continually encounter permanent improvements by man.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received questioned the exclusion of the area; however, no changes in the findings were appropriate.

AREA 232

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located south of Ivanpah Dry Lake, in the Ivanpah Valley. The northern boundary is Nipton Road. The western boundary is Ivanpah Road. The southern boundary is a powerline corridor right-of-way and associated access road. The eastern boundary is the Union Pacific Railway and access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area consists entirely of public lands except for parts of two sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The east and west edges of the area slope north and toward the center of the site, where the terrain is flat. A few shallow washes drain to the center, giving the site's edge a slight rolling appearance. Vegetation is sparse, consisting mainly of low desert shrubs such as catclaw and brittle bush, with the dominant plant being Creosote Bush Scrub. A variety of scattered annual plants are associated with the shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has a few permanent improvements by man, including a large grazing fence south of and parallel to the northern boundary, and a powerline that runs north to south. The remaining area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are severely limited in this area because of the relatively small size, simple terrain, and low desert vegetation. In addition to limited solitude, outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are also limited, because of the inability of the area to screen visitors from one another and from man's work.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments supported inclusion of the area for further wilderness consideration. Another comment stated that the area was unnatural.

AREA 232A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is north of, and adjacent to, the abandoned town of Ivanpah. The area is a triangle, with the northern boundary Saddle Horn Road; the eastern boundary the Union Pacific Railway and associated access road; and, the western boundary, both the Ivanpah Road and a major powerline corridor right-of-way.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This small area consists primarily of public lands with approximately 10 percent being scattered blocks of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is in the eastern portion of the Ivanpah Valley, consisting entirely of a bajada, adjacent to the New York Mountains. The bajada gently slopes north and west and is laced with shallow washes. The vegetation of the area is low desert shrub with the dominant plant being Creosote Bush Scrub. Associated with the shrubs are a variety of annual plants and a few cholla.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This small area has some signs of permanent improvements by man, including a grazing fence in the southern section and powerlines that lead south from a county maintenance yard. The remaining area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of the small size, simple terrain, and low desert vegetation, outstanding opportunities for solitude are limited. Without the ability of the area to provide topographical or vegetative screening, it is virtually impossible for visitors to avoid one another. Outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are also limited. The main limiting factors are the permanent improvements and the inability of the area to provide screening.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The only comment received indicated the area should be included for further study. Further field examinations did not support the opinion, and no changes were made in the findings.

AREA 233

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located at the south end of Ivanpah Valley. The area resembles a triangle, with the eastern boundary Ivanpah Road; the northern boundary a paved road between Nipton Road and Cima; and, the southern boundary both a maintained dirt road used for access to water tanks and a major utility line corridor.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This small area consists primarily of public lands, with 5 percent being non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area consists entirely of a bajada that gently slopes north from the New York Mountains and then flattens at Ivanpah Valley. The bajada is interlaced with numerous shallow washes that minutely break the virtually flat terrain. The vegetation of this area consists mainly of low desert shrubs, with creosote being the dominant plant. There are also a few yucca and cholla sparsely scattered throughout the area, with some Joshua Trees on the southern portions.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This small area has been virtually unaffected by man. There is some evidence of grazing within the boundaries, but this impact has a minimal effect on the general naturalness of the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the area's relatively small size, its shape, the nature of its boundaries, and the general lack of vegetative and terrain variety, opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are limited. The area offers little challenge and diversity and lacks the ability to sufficiently screen visitors from one another.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received claimed that the area does provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

AREA 233A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located north and west of the abandoned town of Ivanpah, the area resembles a triangle with the eastern boundary being Ivanpah Road, the southern boundary being a maintained dirt road used for access to water tanks, and the northern boundary being a major utility line corridor.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This small area consists primarily of public land with about two square miles of scattered blocks of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This very small area consists entirely of a bajada that gently slopes north from the New York Mountains to Ivanpah Valley. The bajada is interlaced with numerous shallow washes, leaving the landscape appearing virtually flat. The vegetation of this area is somewhat varied with creosote dominant, low desert shrub found in abundance, and more sparse stands of Joshua trees, yucca, and cholla spread throughout.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A few man-made features exist in the area, including an improved road to a water tank which enters from the southern boundary and evidence of grazing and other water tanks in the area. Vegetation serves to lessen the impacts of the man-made features through screening.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area's relatively small size, its linear shape, the nature of its boundaries, and the lack of terrain variety all combine to reduce opportunities for both solitude and for primitive recreation. Challenge and diversity are lacking, and man's presence is evident throughout.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments claimed that the area does retain its natural character and does provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. Another comment agreed with the findings.

AREA 233B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located west of, and adjacent to, the abandoned town of Ivanpah. This small area is bordered to the north by both a powerline corridor and a maintained dirt road used for access to water tanks; to the west, by a paved road; to the south, by the Union Pacific Railway and associated access road; and, to the east, by Ivanpah Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This small area consists primarily of public land with approximately 15 percent being scattered blocks of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This small area consists entirely of a bajada just north of the New York Mountains. The bajada gently slopes to the north and is interlaced with numerous shallow washes; thus, the terrain is virtually flat. There is a variety of vegetation in this area, including low desert shrub such as creosote, large stands of Joshua trees and yucca, and some sparse cholla scattered throughout.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has virtually no evidence of man's permanent improvements. There is one primitive way leading north from Brant into the area. This way has a minimal effect on the naturalness of this area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the area's linear shape, its relatively small width, the nature of its boundaries, and the lack of terrain variety, opportunities for both solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Only a few comments were received. Two comments claimed the area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude, one was concerned with potential land-locking of private inholdings should the area be designated as wilderness, two were concerned with a transmission lines' zone of influence affecting the naturalness of the area.

AREA 234

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is Interstate 15 and Nipton Road; the eastern boundary, Ivanpah Road and a paved road used for water tank access; the southern boundary, a major powerline right-of-way; and, the western boundary, a variety of maintained dirt roads used for access to mines and homes.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is primarily public lands, with about 10 percent in scattered blocks of non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The terrain is diverse, with rugged mountains, rolling hills, and sloping bajadas. The Ivanpah Mountains reach elevations over 6000 feet and contain numerous small canyons and washes. Adjacent to the western side of the Ivanpahs, the terrain is more rolling and the washes are shallower. These hills reach elevations around 5000 feet, only a few hundred feet from the valley below. Adjacent to the eastern side of the Ivanpahs is a gentle sloping bajada that is interlaced with numerous shallow washes. The gentle slope, coupled with the shallow washes, gives the terrain a relatively flat appearance. The vegetation is as diverse as the terrain, consisting of cholla, mesquite, yucca, Joshua tree and an occasional juniper.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable in the form of mines, roads, and ways. The southwest Ivanpahs show evidence of past mining activity. Extensive bulldozing, shafts, and large slag piles from the Evening Star, Copper King, and Standard Mines are easily seen. The entire western portion of the Ivanpahs is covered with improved roads and maintained ways leading to mining claims, with presently occupied homes and abandoned shacks. The eastern Ivanpahs are also scattered with scars from past and present mining activity, including the Morning Star, New Trail and Allured Mines. The bajada east of the mountains is laced with maintained roads leading to the mines. All of these permanent improvements significantly detract from the overall naturalness of the area. No portion of the area meets the wilderness characteristic requirements.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are limited because of the numerous permanent improvements which cannot be screened from visitors. Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are also limited, because of the frequency of man-made improvements.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments expressed support for inclusion. A few indicated that mining was extensive. The field teams could find no portion of the area that was without significant man-made improvements.

AREA 235

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The site is located approximately 30 miles northeast of Baker. It incorporates most of the Mescal Range; is roughly 9 miles long and 5 miles wide. The area is bounded by Interstate 15 on the north and the paved Cima Road to the southwest. The eastern border is provided by a combination of mining and grazing roads which connect the Cima Road and the Mountain Pass intersection of Interstate 15.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This site includes approximately four sections of non-public land, scattered throughout the area and accounting for approximately 5 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Landform within the site is generally more varied than that in surrounding areas. The southwestern portion of the area is relatively flat with transitions into bajadas and low rolling hills. In the northern portions the topography is composed of rugged mountains with deep canyons and highly eroded mountain faces. There is a wide variety of vegetation. The vegetative cover is related to exposure and elevation and changes throughout the site. Joshua trees are the visually dominant plant and there are excellent stands spread throughout the area. Yucca, cholla, and a wide variety of smaller desert shrubs, grasses and cactus add interest to the area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Local areas of intense mining activity in the mountainous terrain are highly visible. Tailings, mining debris, abandoned equipment, claims, and prospects are scattered throughout the northern and eastern slopes. These operations, active and inactive, are connected with a network of ways and access routes in varying states of repair. Equipment used in support of grazing operations (water lines, tanks, wooden corrals, etc.) combine to degrade the natural conditions and thus reduce the primitive character and influence.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Although the landform and vegetation would support a physical sense of isolation there are extensive areas where evidence of man's work destroys any true feeling of solitude. Numerous areas exist for outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Diversity of terrain could provide challenges for wilderness-oriented activities.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received favored the inclusion of the site as a wilderness study area in spite of the visual impact of past and present operations. A reevaluation determined that the quality of the area had been degraded below the minimum required for further wilderness consideration.

AREA 235A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located immediately south of Interstate 15 at Valley Wells; bordered on the northeast, by Cima Road; on the northwest, by a maintained road used by the Aiken Cinder Mine; and, on the south and southwest, by cattle tank access roads.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area includes only one or two randomly-placed sections of non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Topography is fairly uniform: flat, with little variation aside from a group of hills on the northwest side. Soil is sandy and white. Two washes cut across the area north to south. Over a six-mile route there is a general drop in elevation from 4200 feet in the south to 3760 feet in the north. Vegetation is also fairly uniform throughout, consisting of a good growth of Joshua trees which is more abundant in the south than in the north, Creosote Bush Scrub and Brittle Bush.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Past and current cattle grazing has not created a damaging impact on naturalness of the land, which remains in an undeveloped primitive state where man's work is substantially unnoticeable and primary effects are the result of the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are available. The northern section has sloping terrain with a small hill. The southern section is associated with the northern slope of Cima Dome.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received supported inclusion of the area for further study. A recheck of the area confirmed the comments.

AREA 236

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern and western borders are formed by a dirt road which runs from Cima Road to Piute Valley. The southern and eastern boundaries are defined by a dirt mine roads. The approximate dimensions of the site are four miles long and two miles wide.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The entire area is composed of public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Other than Striped Mountain (elevation 5,929 feet), the site offers little in the way of vertical relief. Sitting above a bajada, the mountain is not as impressive as many others of equal size which are located on the flat lands. The bajada itself is broken only by an occasional shallow wash. Plant life on the site is much more diverse than that displayed on the lower, surrounding areas. Joshua trees are the visually dominant plant and many fine stands, plus individual specimens, can be found scattered throughout. In addition to Joshua trees, a wide variety of additional vegetation, such as yucca, desert shrubs, grasses and cactus, add interest and variety to the area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The natural condition of the area has been degraded by both past and present use. Mining operations and their related physical improvements such as tailings, claim markers, and ways used to support these activities, are present. These activities detract from the natural character of the landscape.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The site does not provide topographic screening necessary to insure isolation from other users. Although vegetation on the site would reduce the impact of conflicting activities, it is not dense enough, or of the proper nature, to provide seclusion. The uniformity of a large percentage of the landscape tends to reduce the variety of primitive types of recreation available. This, in addition to the fact that the presence of man's work lessens the ability of users to move in an unrestricted manner, precludes the site from satisfying minimal wilderness criteria.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received were generally in favor of including the site as a wilderness study area. Reevaluation determined that the impact of man's presence did not support a change in the original recommendation.

AREA 237

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located five miles south of Interstate 15 at Valley Wells, the area is bordered on the south by a combination of the road from Valley View Ranch east to the road junction at elevation 4433 and the dirt road west from there to elevation 4348 in Section 15, (T. 14 N., R. 12 E.); on the west, by a dirt road running north from Section 15 to elevation 3908 in Section 16, (T. 15 N., R. 12 E.); on the east, by the road from Section 16 south to the Valley View Ranch.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains one and quarter sections of non-public land comprising about 10 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Topography consists of an undulating ground plane with three areas of uplifted hills. The area is the northwest slope of Cima Dome and the bajada beyond it. Soil is light-colored and sandy. The three hills are about 200 feet higher than the surrounding bajada, and are of dark grey and reddish rock. Vegetation is outstanding. Many species of cholla cactus are found here, along with Creosote Bush Scrub and Brittle Bush. The most outstanding aspect of the vegetation is the thick growth of Joshua Trees in the area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. A water tank adjacent to the southern border road and a primitive way in the north have an insignificant affect upon the naturalness of the area. The portion of the non-public land in the extreme north, has been excluded due to ranch complex developments.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive type of recreation are found, due to the rolling topography and thick growth of Joshua Trees. Visitors are effectively screened from one another.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received discussed natural values that supported inclusion of the area into the wilderness study phase. Field checks verified this opinion.

AREA 237A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular-shaped area is bordered on the north by a water tank maintenance road from elevation 4433 in Section 13, (T. 14 N., R. 12 E.), east to the Valley View Ranch; on the southeast, by the dirt road from Valley Ranch to Deer Spring; and, on the southwest, by the road from Deer Spring to the water tank road in Section 13, (T. 14 N., R. 12 E.).

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is entirely public lands, but contains less than 5000 acres. However, the area is surrounded on all sides by potential Wilderness Study Areas; includes superb vegetation; and, is bordered by unobtrusive dirt roads; its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition, would be practicable.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is part of the north slope of Cima Dome. It possesses dense stands of Joshua Trees and cholla cacti inherent to the Dome.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area is affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The Valley View Ranch complex in the extreme eastern corner has been excluded from the area containing wilderness characteristics. Because of the thick vegetation, the ranch buildings are well screened from the remainder of the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are readily available in this area due to screening from thick stands of vegetation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received discussed natural values that supported inclusion of the area into the wilderness study phase. Field checks verified this opinion.

AREA 237B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular-shaped area north of Cima Dome is bordered on the southwest by the dirt road running northwest from Valley View Ranch to elevation 4176 in Section 30 (T. 15 N., R. 13 E.); on the north, by a dirt road from Section 30, east to elevation 4384 in Section 21, (T. 15 N., R. 13 E.); on the east, by a water tank maintenance road from Section 21, south to the Valley View Ranch.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This small area is entirely public lands, contains less than 5000 acres, but is surrounded on two sides by potential Wilderness Study Areas and is bordered by unobtrusive dirt roads. Preservation and use in an unimpaired condition would be practicable.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is part of the north slope of Cima Dome. A wash crosses the northeast corner of the area. Vegetation includes Cholla cacti, Brittle Bush, Creosote Bush Scrub and a dense growth of Joshua trees.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. Cattle grazing does exist within the area, but has little effect upon the naturalness of the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation exist in the area due to the lush vegetation and surrounding potential Wilderness Study Areas.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received discussed natural values that supported inclusion of the area into the wilderness study phase. Field checks verified this opinion.

AREA 238A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The boundaries are roads that are maintained, used, and verified by the Valley View Ranch and the Kessler Springs Ranch.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 2-4 percent of this area is non-public land concentrated in the central portion with a small parcel located in the southeastern portion.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This portion of Cima Dome includes Teutonia Peak (elevation 5755 feet), which can be seen for many miles. Teutonia Peak is the only portion of Cima Dome that can provide excellent viewpoints of the Dome, the New York Mountains, Ivanpah Mountains, and other mountain ranges to the north and south. The general topography of this area is a portion of the rounded Dome itself. The soil type varies locally from sandy to rocky, and is primarily light in color. Teutonia Peak is very rocky, contains several shades of grey, and sharply rises from the surrounding slopes of Cima Dome. The most outstanding feature of this area is the vegetation. Dense stands of large Joshua trees and an exceptionally thick undergrowth of cholla cactus abound within the area surrounding the Peak. In addition, there are also a variety of associated shrub, annual forbs, and native grass species scattered throughout this area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A small portion of this area has been slightly degraded. North of Teutonia Peak is the Teutonia Mine, site of a few old buildings, several mine shafts, and numerous shallow prospect holes. Ranchers use the interior of the area for grazing purposes, but the overall naturalness of the landscape is not impaired by this activity; the area retains its primeval character. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries with exception of the area east of Teutonia Peak. The boundary follows the ridgeline and excludes this portion.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The thick Joshua tree forest and the gently sloping topography provide isolated spaces which provide seclusion for the visitor, offering outstanding opportunities for solitude. Though the area is relatively small, unconfined movement is available due to the lack of man-made intrusions.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments detailed improvements east of Teutonia Peak. These were eliminated from the potential Wilderness Study Area. A large number of comments supported the findings.

AREA 238B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is a portion of Cima Dome. The southern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the northern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet north of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way); on the west, by a maintained telephone line road; and, on the north and east by ranch-related roads.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 5 percent of the area is non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Cima Dome topography consists of the high, broad, rounded dome itself, and two or three rocky ridges which rise abruptly from the surrounding slope. The Dome's slope gently rises from the bajada to the west where it attains a height of 5701 feet. The vegetation is the most outstanding feature of the area; uniform in its distribution; and dominated by dense stands of Joshua tree, thick undergrowth of many varieties of cholla cactus, and associated shrubs and annuals.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The east side of the area, near Cut Spring, has been eliminated from wilderness consideration due to the permanent improvements and roads found in abundance. Cattle are presently being grazed on the land; however, due to the large size of the area, impact is minimal and does not detract from the naturalness of the land. The remainder of the area is affected primarily by the forces of nature and retains its undeveloped primeval character. The carrying capacity for visitors may be very large due to the screening factors.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are offered in the area. The thickness of the Joshua Tree "forest", along with the local topography, provide isolated, secluded spaces. These insure outstanding opportunities for solitude. The gentle terrain and lack of improvements provide outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A large number of comments were received. All were in favor of including the area for further wilderness study recognizing the unique geology, flora, and wilderness qualities, or else included comments regarding the study phase.

AREA 239

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located south of Halloran Summit which is on Interstate 15. It is bounded to the southeast by the Twinstelman Pipeline Road, an improved dirt road used for grazing purposes and for access to the Aiken Cinder Mine; to the west, by the paved Kelbaker Road and a section of improved road leading south from I-15, to the north, by an improved dirt road and a telephone line maintenance road; and, to the east, by a telephone line road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists almost entirely of public land. Non-public lands are widely scattered and account for approximately 5 percent of the total.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The diverse geologic composition of the area is evident in the variety of landforms. Topography ranges from flat valleys and sloping bajadas to rugged lava flows and steep cinder cones. Plant life in the area provides as much variety as the landform. Excellent stands of Joshua trees dominate much of the site. Cholla, barrel, and hedgehog cactus, as well as creosote, low desert shrubs, and grasses are plentiful. Numerous large washes traverse the area supporting riparian-type communities with plants such as Desert Willow.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area near the Cima Mine in the eastern edge of the roadless area has been excluded from further wilderness consideration due to the impact of active cinder mining on the natural character of the area. To the southwest, extensive mining has taken place on many of the cinder cones concentrated there. Scars such as slag piles, deteriorating ways, and notches cut in the top of the cinder cones detract from the naturalness of the immediate area. A road extending one mile toward Granite Spring and a road to Indian Spring have also been excluded. The remainder of the roadless area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature. Man's works, which include only a few primitive ways, are substantially unnoticeable due to topographic and vegetative variation. The area therefore retains its primeval character. The adjusted boundary diverges from the roadless area boundary on the south and east. To the south it follows the road to Indian Spring and then proceeds east to the roadless area boundary. On the east it follows the road to the Cima Mine and then southward to the roadless area boundary.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Within the diverse terrain of this area (which includes cinder cones, sheer-faced lava flows, and bajadas) there are numerous secluded areas where opportunities for solitude are outstanding. Outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are also provided within this area which offers both challenge and diversity.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

The large concentration of cinder cones in the area, along with the abundance of other volcanically originated landforms, make this area geologically significant and fairly unique in the California desert.

VII. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were received. The vast majority supported the findings in the narrative. A few challenged the natural condition, saying many ways detracted from the integrity of the landscape. No changes were made as a result of the comments because the issue raised has been previously known and considered.

AREA 240

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The roadless area covers approximately 10 square miles; is bounded to the north by a telephone line maintenance road that parallels Interstate 15; to the west, by an improved dirt road used for access to water tanks; to the east, by another water tank access road; and, to the south, by an improved dirt road used for grazing purposes.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Most of the area consists of public land with one section of non-public land accounting for approximately 10 percent of the area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area's topography ranges from sloping bajadas to low, rolling hills. Creosote Bush Scrub dominates the area with its associated mixed desert shrubs. Sparse annuals and scattered Joshua trees and Mojave yucca are also found.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Overall, the area has retained its natural character. Man's works, which include abandoned ways leading to wells from the northern boundary, are substantially unnoticeable due to locations among the low hills.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area is relatively small in size, and adjacent to I-15 which dominates. The small area of low hills is not sufficient to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The sparse vegetation does little to enhance these opportunities. Opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are not outstanding.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received supported further study for the area. No changes were made.

AREA 241

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located southeast of the town of Baker. The northern boundary is a gas line and associated access road that is one mile south and parallels Interstate 15. An improved, maintained dirt road is the eastern boundary. The western boundary is the Kelbaker Road, and the southern boundary is an improved dirt road used by ranchers for access to water tanks.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area consists primarily of public land with one section of the area being non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of this area is primarily flat. One small set of mountains along the eastern boundary rises about 800 feet above the flatland. The small mountains are gentle, with smooth ridges and rounded peaks, having a tan appearance with little vegetation on them. In general, the vegetation of this area is low creosote and other small desert bushes, with intermixed, sparse annual plants.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. There is no evidence of the imprint of man's work within the boundaries of this area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Although the area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature, the topography and vegetation have limited ability to screen one person from another. The level terrain, combined with low vegetation and small size, allows visitors to see one another within the area. Thus, outstanding opportunities for solitude are greatly limited. The uniform flat terrain limits the diversity of recreational potential and opportunities for primitive and unconfined types or recreation are not outstanding.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received supported inclusion for further study or addressed study phase factors.

AREA 241A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located southeast of the town of Baker. The northern border is a transmission lines corridor right-of-way and associated access road that parallels Interstate 15. The southern border is a gas line and associated access road one mile south of, and parallel to, Interstate 15. The western boundary is the Kelbaker Road. The eastern boundary is a maintained dirt road used by ranchers for access to water tanks.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This roadless area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unconfined condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments received.

AREA 242

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located west of the town of Baker. The northern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the southern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet south of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way). The eastern boundary is Highway 127, between the town of Baker and the powerlines. The southern boundary is split into two sections: (1) From the town of Baker to the East Cronese Lake, the southern boundary is a powerline road right-of-way; (2) from the Lake to the western boundary, the southern boundary is Interstate 15. The western boundary is an improved Pacific Telephone and Telegraph line road between Interstate 15 and the powerline road to the north.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site includes approximately 20 sections of non-public land scattered throughout, accounting for approximately 5 percent of the total.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of this area varies from gentle sloping bajadas to the rugged Soda Mountains. This highly eroded mountain range has jagged ridges and sharp peaks. The associated washes have steep rocky walls that vary in color from brown at the base to red in the middle and gold toward the top. Within the range are large interior valleys caused by erosion. The bajadas are interlaced with washes and slope away from the mountains toward the boundaries. The vegetation of this area is found mostly at the base of the mountains, in the interior valleys, and in the bajadas. The dominant vegetation is sparse stands of creosote. Intermixed with the creosote are small annual plants and occasional barrel cactus, cholla and yucca.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Portions of this area have been affected by man. Some activity, both past and present, has resulted in a degradation of the natural environment and in the exclusion of these sites from those containing wilderness values. A telephone relay station and access road in the southern Soda Mountains near Interstate 15 at the Beacon overpass has been included. In addition, the active Blue Bell Mine, at VABM 2849, in the Soda Mountains was excluded because of current operations (bulldozing, slag piles, shafts, equipment). Along the western border two active quarries, one mine, borrow pit, and their associated roads and ways have been excluded, in portions of Sections 21, 22, 26, 28, 34 and all of 27, (T. 12N., R. 5E.). Another borrow pit and road, off Highway 91, have been excluded in Section 33 (T. 12N., R. 6E.). In the northern portion of the area having 2(c) values, signs of man's works including an active mine with open pit scars, a house, and its associated road have been excluded. From the northern border in Section 25, (T. 15N., R. 7E.), this road runs south through Sections 25, 36, (T. 15N., R. 7E.), and Sections 1, 2, 11, 14, 15, (T. 14N., R. 7E.). Nearby another mining road comes off the northern border in Section 3 (T. 14N., R. 7E.). It has been excluded also due to its maintenance and associated mining scraps. The southeast corner, near Baker, has been excluded due to several ways, old mining scars and ORV tracks.

The remainder of the area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's works substantially unnoticeable. A way crosses the valley between the Cronese and Soda Mountains. Sections of this way are under water at East Cronese Lake. Several other old ways are in the area but have an insignificant affect upon the naturalness of the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for both solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are outstanding in the area. The large size and variation in landform provide numerous opportunities.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of the comments agreed with the findings. Several comments suggested the southeast border should be extended south. A few comments dealt with additional roads. After field checks, the appropriate changes were made.

AREA 243

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary includes an underground telephone line right-of-way, a cattle fence maintenance road south of Rattlesnake and Big Cowhole Mountains; and, a cattle fence maintenance road that eventually ties into the telephone road near 17-Mile Point on the Kelbaker Road. The eastern boundary includes the Kelbaker Road. The southern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the northern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet north of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way); the railroad line and maintenance road; and, the western boundary, Basin Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 10-15 percent of this area is non-public land scattered throughout the area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains a variety of vegetative types, geographical features, and landforms. Of particular significance is the Mojave River Sink, occupying the southern portion of the area, which grades from flat, rocky terrain on the west to mesquite-covered sand hummocks and small dunes in the central portion. Other significant landforms include the flat, alkali-covered Soda Lake Bed, the low, sand-blanketed hills of Devil's Playground, the large, steep-sided Old Dad Mountain, and the smaller, but rugged, Soda Mountains and Cowhole Mountains. Except for the sand hummock area, which supports a rich community of mesquite and other sand-tolerant plants, vegetation throughout the area is sparse, consisting mostly of creosote and mixed shrubs. A major portion of Soda Lake Bed is entirely devoid of vegetation due to the mineral content in the soil.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A major portion of the area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. Boundary adjustments have been made in order to exclude heavily impacted areas, such as the area just east of Afton Canyon which contains numerous ways and surface scrapings and which appears to have been used as a dumpsite for scrap metal; the Rasor Ranch/ Crucero area which contains numerous ways, off-road vehicle impacts, and the abondoned Rasor Ranch structures; the road to private dwellings from the Rasor Ranch exit on Interstate 15; the improved roads, buildings, and other developments in and around Soda Springs; the roads to active mines (surface scraping, structures, and slag piles) in the Cowhole and Little Cowhole Mountains; and the roads, slag piles, tunnels, and shafts near 17-mile point. A previously graded road leads along the western edge of Old Dad Mountain to a mine (grading or slopes) on the northern edge. An unimproved way continues north from this road along the western edge of the mountains and ties into the road going east from the Little Cowhole Mountains. The way has little impact on the naturalness of the area due to its deteriorated condition.

The adjusted boundary proceeds northeast following a wash from the Union Pacific Railroad at Section 12 (T. 11 N., R. 9 E.) to the edge of the dry lake. It then follows the edge of the dry lake and skirts around the southern edge of the Cowhole Mountains, then northward to the roadless area boundary at Section 30 (T. 13 N., R. 10 E.). Except for the exclusion of the mines near 17-mile point, the boundary generally follows the roadless area boundary from this point on.

Within the adjusted boundaries, the land has generally retained its primeval character and influence. Other works of man, which include a few primitive ways, are substantially unnoticeable due to terrain variety and the sandy nature of some areas.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area contains a variety of topography which provides outstanding opportunities for solitude within the secluded canyons of the mountains and in the vast, open plains. Unobstructed views in many directions enhance feelings of remoteness in the area. The diversity of geological features also provides outstanding opportunities for a wide range of primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comment is overwhelmingly in favor of this area's inclusion as a study area. Many comments urged the addition of the Mojave River Sink on the basis of its ecological significance and apparent naturalness. A few comments opposed the addition of the Sink area due to its popularity for off-road vehicle and camping use in the Rasor Ranch/Crucero area. Field examination revealed the impacts mentioned in Part IV which impaired the natural condition.

AREA 244

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The southern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the northern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet north of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way); on the east, by a maintained road used for access to Rainbow Wells and for service to a utility line; and, on the northwest, by a road used for access to the Aiken Cinder Mine, as well as a maintenance road for adjoining cattle tanks and water line.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains two sections of non-public land, accounting for roughly 10 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains about half of the area known as the "Cinder Cones." Topography varies throughout the area. The Cones rise above the surrounding terrain about 300 feet, are dark red and black, and symmetrically shaped. Between the Cones are large white sandy washes and bajadas and extensive black lava flows of rough extrusive rock. Vegetation in the area varies with the substrate. The washes and bajadas support Creosote Bush Scrub, which grows rather widely spaced across the area, as well as some desert willow. Cholla Cacti and Joshua Trees are also found in these areas. The Cones and lava flows support little vegetation and are in direct contrast to surrounding washes and bajadas.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

One portion of this area has been excluded from further wilderness consideration due to the impact on its natural character created by the Aiken Cinder Mine. The mine lies on the northeastern side of one of the Cones in the northeastern portion of the roadless area. The operation is extensive, utilizing heavy machinery and creating large gashes and slag piles. Only the immediate vicinity of the mine is impacted. The remainder of the Cone, and other nearby Cones, screen out all influence to the west of the mining operation. The remainder of the roadless area retains its primeval character. Man's works, which include a few primitive ways, are substantially unnoticeable due to screening by terrain and vegetation.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Terrain diversity and vegetative variety allow for outstanding opportunities for solitude by providing areas of seclusion. The area also offers challenge, as well as a unique recreation experience, among the Cinder Cones and other volcanic features making opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation outstanding.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of comments received supported the findings.

AREA 245

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the west by a utility line road; on the south, by a gas pipeline-telephone road; on the east, by Kelso-Cima Road; and, the northern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the southern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet south of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way).

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Two or three sections within the area are non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Topography of the area is slightly varied and consists of two basic varieties. The majority of the area consists of flat, gently-sloping bajada. The other topographic feature is a small uplift of mountains which lie at the western end of the area. These hills rise rather abruptly from the surrounding plain. Vegetation of the area for the most part is Creosote Bush Scrub flats, with associated yuccas and cholla cacti. Joshua trees become abundant at the higher elevations, but are nowhere dense.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is primitive and undeveloped, with one exception: a road penetrating from the east to a stock tank. The immediate area of both permanent improvements have been excluded from further wilderness consideration. A way, called "The Old Government Road," bisects the area from east to west, is visible from higher elevations, but is of historical significance, and has not been excluded. An abandoned mine, with associated way, is present in the mountainous area, but the topography serves to screen this area, hence it has no effect on the naturalness. The remainder of the area is affected primarily by the forces of nature and is free of man's influence.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area is relatively unconfined in nature and is of a size and conformity that offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Its location adjacent to another area with wilderness characteristics, Cima Dome, enhances opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of comments which related to the inventory supported the findings.

AREA 246

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area encompasses the Marl Mountains; is bordered on the east by a utility line right-of-way; on the west by the right-of-way for an underground telephone cable running parallel to Kelbaker Road; on the north, by a powerline right-of-way; and, on the south, by the same telephone road which also serves as the western boundary as it turns east to cross Ivanpah Valley.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is roughly 85 percent public land with only one non-public section.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area consists almost entirely of the Marl Mountains, a rather small, rugged rise of hills, bisected in a northwest-southeast axis by an upland valley. These mountains rise about 400 feet above the surrounding bajada, and attain a maximum height of 4508 feet. Vegetation tends to be consistent, composed of Creosote Bush Scrub and associated desert shrubs like Brittle Bush. This growth tends to be relatively thick on the bajadas at the mountain base and then becomes sparse up the steep slopes. Joshua trees and other yuccas are found throughout the area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area retains its primeval character and is not affected by man's influence, with the exception of the area around Marl Springs. Two roads run to the spring and the area has been heavily trampled by cattle. A way continues south from the spring to some light mining areas. The area around the spring, because of its heavy use, detracts severely from the naturalness of the area and, therefore, must be excluded from wilderness consideration. The remainder of the area is generally natural, but confined by bordering development.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude are severely limited. The narrower canyons which penetrate the mountains are few, and so small that solitude would be confined. Primitive types of recreation are possible in the area, but not unconfined, due to lack of vegetational and topographic screening.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Field examination did not verify comment suggestions that outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined type of recreation do exist. Other comments dealt only with study phase considerations.

AREA 247

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located near Kelso, the area is bordered on the west by a utility line right-of-way; on the southeast by Kelso-Cima Road; and, on the north, by a gas pipeline right-of-way.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

One section is non-public land; the remaining area, public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area's topography is very simple and consists entirely of one large bajada, sloping gently to the southwest. The area is cut repeatedly by many washes. The vegetation is unvaried, consisting of Creosote Bush Scrub and associated shrubs, as well as scattered yucca and cholla cacti. This cover is widely spaced, and is nowhere dense.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area is primarily in a natural, undeveloped state, with no permanent improvements by man, and is affected primarily by the forces of nature. A way crosses the area in an east-west orientation; however, due to its unmaintained primitive nature, it has no effect on the naturalness of the land.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation are not possible in the area. The openness of the land, with its lack of vegetational and topographic screening, does not allow visitors to be out of sight and sound from one another.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Field examination did not verify comment suggestions that outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined type of recreation do exist. Other comments dealt only with study phase considerations.

AREA 248

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located near Kelso, the area is bordered on the west by Kelbaker Road; on the north by a pipeline-telephone road; on the east by a utility line road; and, on the south by Kelso-Cima Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

One section is non-public land; the remaining area, public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of the area is basically a flat, gently-sloping bajada composed of sandy, light-colored soil. Rocks are locally abundant, especially around the washes. Vegetation is likewise unvaried and consists of Creosote Bush Scrub, with associated yuccas and cacti. Small Joshua trees are found in the northern extreme of the area. Growth throughout the area is sparse.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area remains in its undisturbed, undeveloped nature, and is free of permanent improvements. Man is a visitor in this area, which is affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation are lacking in the area. The lack of vegetational and topographic screening, as well as the long narrow shape, tends to confine visitors.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Field examination did not verify comment suggestions that outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined type of recreation do exist. Other comments dealt only with study phase considerations.

AREA 249

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the southern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet south of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way). The eastern boundary is Kelbaker Road, and the southern boundary is the railroad line from Kelso to Sand.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 5-10 percent of this area is non-public land. These parcels are scattered randomly throughout the roadless area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains a variety of topography that includes sand dunes, flat plains, small valleys, medium sized hills, buttes, bajadas, and steep mountains. The predominant vegetation type is creosote-desert shrubs, for most of this area, with some yucca, cholla cacti, red barrel cacti, mesquite (in some riverbeds) and a few smoke trees. The sand dunes and associated sandy plains contain a variety of desert shrub and grasses that are somewhat different from the creosote vegetation type and are confined to the western portions of this area. The Kelso Mountains, including Kelso Peak (elevation 4767 feet), are included in this area, and have diverse geological landforms. The mideastern portion contains a gradual sloping bajada that flows eastward to Kelbaker Road. A forest of Joshua trees occur on the bajada, as well as uniform stands of tall creosote. The area also contains wide sloping valleys, winding canyons, and steep rocky mountains. The southern portion is similar to the mideastern portion, but has fewer Joshua trees. The western portion contains a sand dune system that gradually slopes east and west against a range of mountains just south of Old Dad Mountain. The vegetation on these dunes is comprised of low-growing desert shrub and grass communities. The scenic quality of the light pale yellow sand dunes against the dark reddish-brown mountains is very high. Vegetation that covers the sand dunes further adds to the scenic quality of this area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

There is one specific area where man and his own works dominate the landscape: a microwave relay station and access in the mid-northern portion, located in the higher elevations of the Kelso Mountains. This relay station and road has been excluded from further wilderness consideration. There is a well-maintained fence that parallels the Old Kelbaker Road in one portion on the eastern boundary. These two areas do not seriously degrade the overall primeval character of the landscape. The potential wilderness study area boundary is common with the roadless area boundary with the exclusion for the relay station and service road.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude can be obtained within this area because of the size, and a combination of narrow, winding canyons, small valleys and steep mountains. These land formations create an atmosphere where solitude can be found. In addition, primitive types of recreation can be enjoyed in this area because of the diverse geological landforms.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most public comments were generally supportive of the findings. Other comments addressed study phase considerations.

AREA 250

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The southern boundary is a transmission line right-of-way and service road. The western boundary is a well-graded telephone line road through Broadwell Dry Lake Valley; the northern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the southern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet south of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way); and, to the east, the paved Kelbaker Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area has a complex land ownership pattern, with non-public lands occurring in north and south columns. Non-public lands account for approximately 30 percent of the entire area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This extremely large area contains a variety of landforms. The Kelso Dunes, the tallest dunes in the California Desert, are located within its borders, as well as two large, sweeping valleys and the extensive, rolling Bristol Mountains. Vegetation is sparse, consisting mostly of creosote and mixed shrubs. Throughout much of the area, sweeping views across open desert to the steep, rugged Granite and Providence Mountains enhance the scenic nature of the area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The potential wilderness study area boundary is common with the roadless area boundary with the exception of a small excluded area between two parallel roads in the southeast corner. Excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Areas were patented mining claims located at Section 10 (T. 9 N., R. 8 E.), Section 2 (T. 8 N., R. 12 E.) and Section 24 - 25 (T. 9 N., R. 12 E.). The area appears to have retained natural values with the limited exceptions being unnoticeable away from the immediate area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Variety of terrain, numerous enclosed areas, and the immensity of the landscape offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. Opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are also outstanding. Experiences vary with the location, ranging from the intimacy of small, enclosed canyons and valleys in the hills to the vastness of the large, open valleys.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most of the public comments received regarding this area agreed with the findings on naturalness; however, many of these same commentors felt that the area was better suited to non-wilderness uses. These comments will be dealt with during the study phase. There were also several comments which discussed, in very general terms, impacts which would degrade the natural condition. Reevaluation by the field team did not validate these latter comments.

AREA 251

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The southern boundary is the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. The southeastern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the northwestern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet northwest of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way). The northern border is largely the Union Pacific Railroad. The western boundary is formed by privately developed roads between Mannix and Newberry Springs.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 60 percent public lands alternating with non-public holdings in north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This extremely large area includes the Troy Lake depression, Cady Mountains, and a portion of the Mojave River Sink. The Cady Mountains are a low, dark series of detached ridges rising 1000 feet to 1500 feet from the intervening valleys. Washes which bisect the ridges are broad and contain wind-deposited sand. On the east side of the Cady Mountains, a valley of loose sandy soil slopes generally northeast into the Mojave River Valley and Afton Canyon, with its steep, multicolored, highly eroded, canyon walls. Vegetation in the Cady Mountains is largely saltbush and other low shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The western edge of the area is in private ownership, from the Mojave River south to the Troy Lake depression. The area contains permanent improvements in the form of small ranches, homes, developed water sources, small lakes, and a lattice of maintained access roads. Several mining and quarry operations are also scattered along the western edge. A microwave relay facility is located along the powerline boundary approximately four miles north of its intersection with the southern border, but is only visible from near the powerline boundary. Elsewhere, unmaintained ways lead to apparently abandoned mining operations, but are substantially unnoticeable. Exclusions from further wilderness consideration have been made for mining activity along the southern slopes of these mountains. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area border from Afton to Balch siding. Returning along the southeast powerline border to the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad, the borders are also common but exclude the microwave relay facility. The southern border has been drawn along the mountain bajada interface and excludes roads and mining impacts along this boundary. The western border starts east of Newberry Road and proceeds due north along the edges of the mountains from Section 19 (T. 9 N., R. 5 E.) to the Mojave River which it follows generally eastward to Afton. This arbitrary western border excludes the western end of the area where permanent improvements (roads, habitations and ways) have severely altered the primeval character and influence of the land and the area north of the Mojave River where solitude and a diversity of recreational opportunities are lacking.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The extreme size of the area gives the visitor a feeling of isolation in the sandy valleys and among the highly-eroded, exposed ridges. This offers an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The character of the landscape does not reflect the presence of man. The area contains vast areas of windblown sand and volcanic ridges, thus providing outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. However, the portion to the north, just south of the Union Pacific Railroad, lacks vegetative or topographic screening and has only limited opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation and therefore has been excluded.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments indicate the presence of several ways within the area used for rockhounding and as access to mines. Potential geothermal and mineral resources are also noted. Other comments are in agreement with the findings. Mining areas along the southern boundary have been excluded from further wilderness consideration, where appropriate.

AREA 251A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern border is the Union Pacific Railroad; the southern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the northern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet north of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way); and, the western border a wood pole utility line.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is roughly 75 percent public lands in the north with alternating strip patterns of non-public lands in the south.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the scattered Mesquite Hills and sloping alluvial formation associated with the northern end of the Bristol Mountains. The northeast portion of the area is influenced by the Devils Playground area and contains areas of deep wind-deposited dune sand. The whole area is very low, with elevations ranging from 988 feet to 1300 feet on the alluvium to 1568 feet on Crucero Hill. Vegetation is sparse with scattered saltbush in the sandy locations and a Creosote Bush Scrub plant community on the southern rocky alluvium.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is affected primarily by the forces of nature throughout. Ways are used by off-road vehicles, especially in the Mesquite Hills area, but are subject to rehabilitation by the blowing sand in the area, thus the wilderness condition is restored. The potential wilderness study area boundary is common with the roadless area boundary.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The vastness of the visible landscape and absence of man-made features provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and unrestricted movement through a classic desert setting.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

All comments dealt with study phase considerations.

AREA 252

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangle-shaped area is bounded completely by utility lines. The northern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the southern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet south of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way); the eastern boundary a graded road and a telephone line right-of-way; and, the southern boundary, a powerline/gas line right-of-way, with associated maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The roadless area is approximately 60 percent public land with non-public holdings occurring in alternating north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area contains the South Cady Mountains. A large, sweeping bajada is located near the center, sloping eastward to Broadwell Dry Lake. Vegetation on the bajada is scattered and consists of cactus, creosote, and mixed shrubs. Except in the canyons and washes, vegetation in the mountains is sparse.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is relatively undisturbed by man. Man's influence, which includes only a few primitive ways and a few abandoned mine shafts and prospect holes, is substantially unnoticeable due to the topographic screening in the hills. Much of the southern slope of the South Cady Mountains has been excluded from further wilderness consideration due to extensive mining scars which greatly impact naturalness. Both the Black Butte and the Argos Mines have been similarly excluded, along with the other mines on that southern slope. Other mining activity at the Old Dominion Mine and a short maintained road have also been excluded at the northernmost point of the roadless area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The variety of terrain in the hills offers many outstanding opportunities for solitude by providing areas of seclusion and isolation. Size and terrain variety are also responsible for the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Visitors can experience both the intimacy of small, enclosed areas in the hills and canyons, and the vastness and openness of the large bajada between the South Cady Mountains and the Cady Mountains. The relative absence of internal man-made features also enhances opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments referred to the presence of roads and ways; expressed interest in motorized recreation use, and pointed out potential mineral and energy resources. Roads and ways were evaluated and excluded from further wilderness consideration, where appropriate.

AREA 253

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located 23 miles west of the town of Baker, north of and abutting Interstate 15. The northern boundary is a powerline corridor right-of-way and associated access road. The southern boundary is Interstate 15. The eastern boundary is a maintained dirt road between Interstate 15 and the powerlines.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Every other section of this area is non-public land except for a small block at the northern tip. The area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Except for an area of low mountains in the northeast portion, the area is relatively flat. It is comprised mainly of a bajada that gently slopes to the south and west. The landscape has a gentle transition from the mountains to rolling hills to bajada to flat valley, which adds to scenic quality. The vegetation of this area is low desert shrub and a variety of annual plants. Creosote is the dominant plant throughout the area but becomes very sparse in the southern part of the area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The roadless area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable. No permanent improvements exist in the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

In the small block of public land neither solitude nor unconfined recreation opportunity exist.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments favored wilderness study status for the area. Several others stated the area was not natural.

AREA 254

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the north by a gas/telephone line right-of-way; to the south, by the Marine Corps Training Center at Twentynine Palms; to the east, by a Marine Corps Base right-of-way; and, to the west, by a graded road to the active Stedman Mine.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The roadless area is approximately 70 percent public land with non-public holdings occurring in north-south strips of alternating odd sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This relatively narrow area consists entirely of a flat, sparsely vegetated bajada sloping northeastward from the Bullion Mountains. Vegetation is mostly of the creosote-mixed desert shrub association.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Internally, the area is free from any man-made developments. Therefore, it has generally retained its primeval character.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Neither terrain nor vegetation provide any visual screening, thereby making it difficult to find seclusion. Due to the area's shape, its relatively small size, and its openness, it could not accommodate many visitors without reducing opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Field examination did not validate the comments suggesting that outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined type of recreation exist.

AREA 254A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the west by a road running south from Lavic; on the north, by a gas pipeline right-of-way; on the south, by the boundary to the Marine Corps Training Center at Twentynine Palms; and, on the east, by a maintained road running from Ludlow south to the Stedman site.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 50 percent of this area is non-public land in a random pattern.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Topography consists of hills which rise abruptly from the bajadas. The area includes the extreme northern hills of the Bullion Mountains, as well as the bajadas to the immediate north and east. The mountains are small, but steep-sided, and are of a red-gold color. This is contrasted by the white color of the surrounding washes and bajadas. Vegetation consists mainly of Creosote Bush Scrub, as well as associated shrubs and annuals. Nowhere is this growth exceedingly thick. Some of the hills show almost no vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The eastern section of this area is being actively mined at Stedman and immediately north at the Gold Standard Lode Mine. The entire section has permanent improvements of man visible in the forms of roads, ways, mining scars, tailings, ruins, and mining superstructures. The land shows that it has been primarily influenced by man's activities. No roads penetrate the mountains of the northern or western sections; however, the northern bajada is cut repeatedly by water diversion dams. Hence, the area does not retain its undeveloped character and is not free of permanent improvements.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are not to be found in the eastern area. The presence of the current mining in the east, and the sound of heavy equipment from this mining, make opportunities for solitude nonexistent. Opportunities for solitude could exist in the northern section if one proceeds to the southern end of a wash. Because the area is only about two miles wide, the ability of the visitor to have freedom of movement would be greatly curtailed, therefore making unconfined types of recreation impossible.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Field examination did not validate the comment which suggests that outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined type of recreation exist.

AREA 255

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the north by the Atcheson, Topeka, and the Santa Fe Railroad and Highway 66; to the east, by a short graded road; to the south, by a gas line right-of-way and associated maintenance road; and, to the west, by a graded road leading to the active Stedman Mine.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 60 percent public with non-public holdings occurring in alternating north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The landform consists mostly of low, rounded hills cut by numerous, shallow washes. Vegetation is uniformly sparse, consisting mostly of creosote and low shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The central portion remains free from man's influence, although a few maintained roads and developments penetrate the area from the edges. Such developments include a road to a microwave repeater near the southwest corner, a road to a mining cabin from the northern boundary, and a road to a major mining operation near the eastern boundary. The mining operation comprises a network of graded roads and surface scrapings. A series of unimproved ways also enter this area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Terrain variety does screen out some outside influences, but the low, rounded topography offers little in the line of screening visitors from one another. Therefore, opportunities for solitude are limited. For the same reasons, and also as a result of the small size of the area and its internal man-made features, opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are not outstanding.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Field examination did not validate comment which suggested that outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined type of recreation exist.

AREA 255A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is a combination of Interstate 40 and a high pressure gas line right-of-way and associated maintenance road; the eastern boundary, a maintained access road to a gas pipeline road from Klondike; and, the southern boundary, a railroad maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 5-10 percent of this area is non-public land, running in parallel north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of this area consists of a gradual sloping bajada that slopes to the south and west. There are a few low, rounded hills surrounded by shallow washes within the bajada. The vegetation is sparse, consisting of creosote and associated desert shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The vast majority of this area is criss crossed by graded roads and ways. Therefore, this area does not generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature and has lost its primeval character.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude do not exist in this area. Flatness of terrain and lack of vegetative screening do not allow visitors to be screened from one another. Primitive, unconfined recreation is also not possible.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Field examination did not validate the comments which suggested that outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined type of recreation exist.

AREA 256

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by a high capacity powerline right-of-way; on the west by a well-maintained telephone line road; and, on the south by Interstate 40. To the southeast and east, it is bounded by roads used by cattle ranchers to maintain wells, springs, and corrals, and on the southwest corner by a natural gas pipeline.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The roadless area is approximately 70 percent public land with non-public holdings occurring in alternating north-south strips of odd sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The Granite Mountains comprise the dominant landform feature. Pinyon Pine and Juniper cover the upper portions of the mountains. The Old Dad Mountains and the Bristol Mountains are also located within the area. The Old Dad Mountains appear to be a tilted and bisected volcanic plain, while the Bristol Mountains have a more rolling character. Vegetation on both ranges is sparse. The area also contains some large valleys where creosote and mixed desert shrubs dominate.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally retains its primeval character. Man's impacts, which include a few unimproved ways to abandoned mines, mining shacks, and old corrals, are substantially unnoticeable due to topographic and vegetative screening. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries but exclude the southern half of Sections 33, 34, 35, 36 (T. 8N., R. 10E.) and access roads to this mining area. Other roads excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Area are in Budweiser Wash to Section 20 (T. 8N., R. 12E.), to Willow Spring Basin in Section 26 (T. 8N., R. 12E.), and to the Onyx Mine in Section 8 (T. 8N., R. 10E.).

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude in its immense valleys and in the mountains. The large valleys offer a sense of vastness and spaciousness, while the coves and interior valleys in the mountains provide a sense of enclosure and seclusion. Due to the area's variety of terrain and relative lack of internal man-made features, opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are outstanding.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments were varied, referring to ecological importance of Granite Mountains, specific mining areas and access roads, recreational interests by rockhounding groups, and potential for minerals and energy. Changes were made where road and mining activities impacted potential wilderness values.

AREA 257

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is Interstate 40; the southern boundary, a gas line maintenance road right-of-way; the eastern boundary, a combination of the southern boundary and a connecting road from that boundary to the junction of Interstate 40 and Kelbaker Road; and, the western boundary a graded road from the southern boundary to Interstate 40.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 30-40 percent non-public lands which occur in north-south strips of alternating odd sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains the part of the Bristol Mountains and the bajadas which border it on the west and east and, to a lesser degree, on the south. The red-brown color of the steep and rugged mountains is contrasted by the grey and white of the bajadas. Soil tends to be rocky except for sandy wash bottoms. Vegetation is widely spaced mixed desert shrubs (Creosote Bush Scrub, Brittle Bush). Many annuals are present. Vegetation in the washes is more predominant than on the slopes and consists mainly of creosote with scattered portions of associated desert shrub and native grass species. There are also isolated portions of various cacti.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

In two major portions man and his own works dominate the landscape. The southeast portion contains two old mining areas; the Orange Blossom Mine, and another mining area north of Orange Blossom Mine. There are also mining stakes scattered throughout the vicinity. Several old jeep ways were found around the Orange Blossom Mine, north of that mine, and in the central portion of the area, but they appear to be revegetating naturally. Roads lead to the Orange Blossom Mine and the mining area north of the Orange Blossom Mine. The remaining portion generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation would be restricted because the area's size and shape tend to be confining. There is also a lack of geologic diversity, and a scarcity of vegetation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received supported wilderness study status because of natural values. No changes were made.

AREA 258

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is Interstate 40; the eastern boundary, a maintained road from Bagdad to a gas pipeline maintenance road; and, the western boundary, a maintained road from Klondike to a gas pipeline maintenance road. The southern boundary is a combination of a graded road north of the railroad tracks, the railroad track line, and its maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

One-third of the area is non-public land. This non-public land ownership pattern is in north-south parallel strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The majority of this area is a combination of gradually sloping bajadas to the south and eroded, steep and rounded hills. There are shallow and major washes throughout. The predominate vegetation is creosote, with scattered portions of desert shrub and fewer native grass species. Soil color varies from light tan and grey to reddish brown. This area also contains the volcanic reddish brown Lava Hills which are isolated within the wide sloping bajadas on the west and east.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area remains in its primitive undeveloped state. Man's works are substantially unnoticeable, and it is primarily affected by the forces of nature. No roads were observed in this area. There was a way east of Lava Hills, and one in the southwest portion, but both ways were revegetating naturally. A patented mine in Section 5 (T. 6 N., R. 10 E.) has been excluded. A block of approximately five square miles southwest of Black Ridge has been excluded from further wilderness consideration due to bulldozer scars.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude exist in portions of this area; especially in the Lava Hills. In addition, the distance from the base of the mountains across the bajada to the Old National Trails Highway actually enhances the feeling of solitude and freedom of movement. The ruggedness of the mountains also tends to topographically screen visitors from one another. Primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities are also outstanding because of the area's large size and diversity of terrain.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments supported the findings in the narrative. Some indicated mineral and energy potential. Changes on the map reflect specific information received on roads and man-made features.

AREA 258A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area, which includes the southern terminus of the Bristol Mountains, is bordered on the east by Kelbaker Road and its associated spur; on the north, by a gas pipeline right-of-way; on the west, by a maintained road from Bagdad to the northern pipeline; and, on the south, by another gas pipeline right-of-way.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 25-35 percent of this area is non-public land running in parallel north-south strips of alternating odd sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains the southern terminus of the Bristol Mountains and the bajadas which border it on the west and east and, to a lesser degree, on the south. The mountains are steep and rugged, and present a red-brown color contrasted by the lighter grey and whites of the gently sloping bajadas. Soil tends to be rocky throughout, with the exception of the sandy wash bottoms. Vegetation tends to be mixed desert shrubs (Creosote Bush Scrub, Brittle Bush,) and rather widely-spaced. Many annuals are present. Vegetation in the washes shows little change, but is healthier in river beds than the surrounding areas.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

With the exception of the southeastern portion, and a road from Amboy to prospects in Section 17 (T. 6N., R. 12E.), this area's primitive, undeveloped state has been retained. Man's works are substantially unnoticeable, and it is primarily affected by the forces of nature. No roads penetrate this area. In the southeastern portion many mines are present, with roads and ways leading to them. A radio repeater station is also present, along with its access road. Many off-road vehicle scars are present on the southern hills and show erosion. All of these aspects have the effect of making this portion unsuitable due to permanent improvements and the extent to which the area has been disturbed by man. This impacted portion was omitted from further wilderness consideration.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude exist throughout the northern portions. The distance from the base of the mountains across the bajada to the Old National Trails Highway actually enhances the feeling of solitude and freedom of movement. The ruggedness of the mountains tends to topographically screen visitors from one another. Primitive and unconfined recreation are well-suited to this area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments expressed recreational interest and potential energy development as well as the primitive recreational potential. Field evaluations on the ground and from the air revealed a prospecting road, but otherwise supported the original findings.

AREA 259

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western boundary is Kelbaker Road; the southern boundary, interstate gas pipeline rights-of-way paralleling Old National Trails Highway; the eastern border Old National Trails Highway; and the northern border, a wooden pole utility line road and a pipeline maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 69 percent public lands with non-public lands in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the Marble Mountains, running northwest to southeast with long alluvial fans on either side. The Marble Mountains are a narrow volcanic range of unique coloration. Alternating dark brown and light brown striations have been tilted by geologic processes, giving a marbled appearance to the range. Through the center of the range, several yellowish sandstone peaks with long talus slopes are prominent. Vegetation is very sparse on the mountain slopes, but dense in the washes and on the very rocky alluvial fans with Creosote Bush Scrub.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Permanent improvements are apparent in the southwestern alluvial fan area. There is an active mine, with dwelling, at Castle Mine near the center of the mountain range. The road to this site runs north-northeast from the southwest corner, six miles into the area. Numerous assessment holes and general off-road vehicle scarring dominate the landscape between the Marble Mountains and Bristol Mountains on the alluvial formation in the southwest region. Along the southern face of the Marble Mountains, north of Chambless, extensive mining activity significantly alters the primeval character of the land. One very large, patented iron mine (The Iron Hat Mine) is a major scar and has been excluded. Several smaller mining operations are scattered near the area boundary at Cadiz Summit. Roads and ways used as access to these sites dominate the area north of Chambless. Several dwellings are located in this area, and a small network of streets. The northern alluvium and the Marble Mountains north and northwest of the Iron Hat mine are areas where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man. The primeval character and influence are apparent in this portion. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries from Cadiz Summit to the northern utility line border, and west to the intersection of the north pipeline road with Kelbaker Road. From this point, the border proceeds southeast to exclude the impacted lowlands to Castle Mine Road, which is also excluded. The boundary proceeds further southeast to the Iron Hat Mine, which is excluded, and follows the mountain ridgeline further southeast to Cadiz Summit. The potential Wilderness Study Area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The Marble Mountains offer isolation in the steep canyons and broad views of the surrounding, sparsely-populated landscape. These factors provide seclusion and offer outstanding opportunities for solitude within the potential Wilderness Study Area. The varied rock structures in these Mountains provide challenging terrain for a variety of types of primitive recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments which referred to inventory criteria supported the findings.

AREA 260

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the north by Interstate 40. The eastern border is Essex Road and a wooden pole utility line maintenance road. The southern boundary is a gas pipeline right-of-way and associated maintenance road and the western boundary is a wooden pole utility line maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 35-45 percent of this area is non-public land in a uniform strip pattern that extends in a north-south direction.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area boundaries encompass the Clipper Mountains, surrounding bajadas associated with Fenner Valley to the east, Clipper Valley to the north and west, and a small group of hills at the west end called the Middle Hills. The mountains are oriented generally east-west and rise to 4604 feet at their highest point. Elevations of the surrounding bajadas range 2000 feet to 2400 feet. The low ridges at the southern end are pinkish in color and are capped with volcanic dikes and rocky spires. The most prominent ridge lies in the north-central region and is a large mesa with alternating yellow and dark brown horizontal striations. Jagged yellowish buttes and spires are scattered through the area south of this ridge. The broad valley portions of this area support a dense creosote scrub plant community. The rocky hillsides and steeper slopes are very sparsely vegetated, while higher northern exposures support Mojave yucca, cacti, and low desert shrubs. Some interior washes support stands of mesquite and smoke trees.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man-made improvements are evident in portions of the roadless area. Scattered prospects in the northern half are apparently abandoned. The forces of nature seem to be reclaiming the formerly maintained access routes to these sites at Hummingbird Spring and Chuckwalla Spring. These improvements are insignificant in their effect upon the naturalness of the landscape and are well-screened and have not been excluded. Along the southern border, maintained mining access roads intrude into the polygon to the Tom Reed Mine, Bonanza Spring, and a third mining site two and one-half miles west of Bonanza Spring. Several dwellings are located just south of Bonanza Spring and impacts from this human habitation alter the primeval character and influence of the landscape. The mining area west of Bonanza Spring contains trailers and several mining sites as well. These areas were omitted from the portion that contains wilderness values. There is an apparently abandoned openpit mining area in the northeastern portion of this area that did not appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. Though only one short road leads into the area, a rehabilitation process would take many years and perhaps never restore this immediate vicinity back to its natural condition; therefore, this small portion has been excluded from the remaining portion that does contain wilderness values.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The topography of this area consists of high flat-topped ridges, scattered low rocky buttes, and scattered hills, which provides screening from other visitors to this area. This variety in the terrain also offers varying degrees of challenge for a diversity of recreational opportunities. By providing isolation and geological diversity, the area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude, including outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Some of the comments received supported the findings in the narrative. Others indicated the mineral potential should be considered.

AREA 261

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This flat area is bounded on the northwest and south by mining, grazing, and stock water tank access roads and, on the east by the Essex Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is approximately 50 percent non-public lands in north-south running strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is a western portion of the Clipper Valley. The area is a flat, east-facing moderate slope. The vegetation is predominantly mixed desert shrub community, with creosote, cacti, grasses, and other species.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Several ways which criss-cross the roadless area do not appear noticeable due to vegetative factors.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Limited opportunities for solitude are available; however, opportunities for primitive and confined types of recreation are not. While moving through the area, the visitor frequently encounters vehicle ways.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments supported study inclusion for natural values. Another comment stated that the area was not natural.

AREA 261A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This linear shaped area is bounded on the north by a mining/grazing access road; on the east, by the Essex Road; on the south, by Interstate 40; and, on the west, by a well-maintained mining/grazing access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is approximately 50 percent non-public land in north-south running strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This southwestern portion of the Clipper Valley is a flat, moderate east-facing slope. The valley terrain appears uniform in vegetative composition. The dominating vegetation is creosote with yucca, cacti, and other mixed desert shrub and grass species.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has retained its primeval character and generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The primary use of this area is cattle grazing.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area has limited opportunities for solitude and unconfined or primitive type of recreation. The narrow linear shape of the area and the uniform flat terrain and vegetation would not effectively screen users from one another. Opportunities for solitude and unconfined or primitive type of recreation would be severely inhibited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment supported study inclusion of the area for solitude and natural values. Further examination did not support the contention.

AREA 261B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This small area is bounded on the north, east, and west by mining/grazing access roads and, on the south, by Interstate 40.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is approximately 50 percent non-public land in north-south running strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is dominated by Van Winkle Mountain. This mountain is oriented in a northwest to southeast direction and appears uniform with little variation in its oblong shape, except for a few canyons.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has not retained its primeval character and generally appears to have been substantially affected by man's works. There are several developments in the area. The northern portion has a maintained corral, water tank, spring improvement, and mining activity, with access roads to each development. The eastern portion has been extremely denuded and graded from previous Interstate 40 construction operations and is beyond reasonable rehabilitation consideration.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This small area has limited opportunities for solitude and unconfined or primitive types of recreation due to the many developments and landscape alterations which are substantially noticeable from almost anywhere within the area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Comment supported inclusion of this area due to the integrity of the landscape of Van Winkle Mountain. No changes were made as a result of the comment.

AREA 261C

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This small area is bounded on the northwest by the Kelbaker Road; on the northeast, by a telephone line and maintenance road; and, on the south, by Interstate 40.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land nor is it of sufficient size to make practical its use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment regarding the inventory addressed a boundary discrepancy. No changes were made as a result of the comment.

AREA 262

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the north by a high voltage transmission line and gas line right-of-way corridor with accompanying roads through Foshay Pass; on the east, by a stock water tank access road, which is also used for access to the active Bighorn Mine; on the south, by an access road to the Bighorn Mine; and, on the west, by the Kelbaker Road, and access roads to Arroweed Springs.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is predominantly public land with approximately 30 percent random blocks of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is dominated by the southern Providence Mountains. These rugged mountains have many secluded canyons and are accompanied by vast flat bajadas and valleys with many hidden washes. The most southern part of the Providence Mountains is composed of huge granitic boulders. The northern portion is composed of metamorphic and igneous rock formations with color striations and sheer cliffs. The valleys and bajadas are vegetated with mixed desert shrubs, creosote, yucca, cactus, and grasses. The higher elevations are vegetated with a mixed Pinyon Pine/Juniper forest and shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has generally retained its natural character. Man's works, which include some primitive ways leading to patented mining claims at Pine Tree Ranch Section 22 and 27 (T. 9 N., R. 13 E.), Section 20 and 29 (T. 9 N., R. 14 E.), Section 6 (T. 9 N., R. 14 E.), and Section 12 (T. 9 N., R. 13 E.), are substantially unnoticeable due to the screening effect of the diverse terrain and the deteriorated nature of the features. The potential Wilderness Study Area boundary is common with the roadless area boundary and excludes several roads extending into the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The large size and varied terrain, with its many secluded canyons and hidden washes, provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area also possesses many outstanding opportunities for an unconfined and primitive type of recreation. Varied terrain features, such as large rolling valleys and bajadas, and the Providence Mountains with sheer cliffs, secluded canyons, varied rock formations and available spring water, provide abundant challenging opportunities for unconfined and primitive types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most of the public comments support the findings. Some comments identified roads and impacts related to mining and grazing activities. Roads which were field validated have been added to the map. Comments dealing with mineral potential will be addressed during the study phase.

AREA 263

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The roadless area is bounded to the north by a mining access road through Macedonia Canyon, to the northeast by the Wildhorse Canyon Road southeast to a windmill in Section 17, (T. 11 N., R. 15 E.) and a short dirt road, from the windmill, southeast to elevation 3993; to the east, by the Black Canyon Road south to Section 20, (T. 10 N., R. 15 E.); on the south, by a combination of a dirt road from Section 20 southwest to Section 19 (T. 10 N., R. 15 E.), a dirt road running northwest to the 7IL Ranch, a dirt road northwest to the Bonanza King Well and southeast to a waterline maintenance road through Sections 34 and 33, (T. 11 N., R. 14 E.) and Section 2, (T. 11 N., R. 14 E.), the water line maintenance road south to the utility line right-of-way, a major powerline right-of-way west to the intersection of the Vulcan Mine Road in Section 32, (T. 10 N., R. 14 E.), and the Vulcan Mine Road northwest to the western boundary; and, to the west, by the Kelbaker Road and the Union Pacific Railroad.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists mostly of public land. Non-public lands are scattered and account for less than 20 percent of the roadless area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The Providence Mountains vary in landform from limestone cliffs and caverns to rhyolitic crags and peaks. Upper elevations are vegetated with a Pinyon-Juniper plant community while, at the lower elevations, yucca, cactus, and mixed desert shrubs dominate. Other landforms in the roadless area include the volcanically-originated Wildhorse Mesa, a large, flat-topped landform composed of numerous layers of black, volcanic rock, as well as broad, sweeping bajadas and valleys. Diverse cactus gardens exist on the high portions of the bajadas, while the lower portions and the valleys have Mojave yucca and mixed desert shrub plant cover. Color variety in the area is a result of the diverse rock types exposed there (reddish rhyolitic crags, grey limestone ciffs, and black lava flows) and the variety of vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Boundary adjustments have been made to exclude roads and areas that have lost their natural character due to man's impact. A network of mining and grazing roads has been excluded in the southeast corner of the roadless area. This excluded area is defined by: (1) the patented mining claims and mining operations in Section 25, (T. 10 N., R. 13 E.), at the Vulcan Mine; (2) a line north of Foshay Pass, through Sections 31 and 29, (T. 10 N., R. 14 E.); (3) a line running up the west side of Sections 28, 21, 16 and 9, (T. 10 N., R. 14 E.); (4) a line running on the north side of this Section 9 east to adjacent Section 3; (5) a line up the west side and over the north side of this same Section to the southwest corner of its northern Section 33 (T. 11 N., R. 14 E.); (6) a line up the west side of Section 33; (7) here the line runs west along the top of Section 33 to the Silver King Mine Road and along the eastern edge of the road to the roadless area boundary. This large exclusion includes the Bonanza and Silver King Mines, the Mitchell Caverns and Mexican Mine patented mining claims and associated road, and numerous ways. Other exclusions in the area include: (1) The 7IL Ranch complex; (2) the road from the 7IL Ranch up Beecher Canyon to a windmill in Section 27, (T. 11 N., R. 14 E.); (3) the road from the 7IL Ranch up Barber Canyon to another windmill in Section 27; (4) the road to Bearclaw Well in Sections 7 and 18, (T. 10 N., R. 15 E.); (5) the patented mining claims in Section 32, (T. 11 N., R. 15 E.) along the eastern border; (6) the road to two windmills in Sections 11 and 12, (T. 11 N., R. 14 E.); (7) the Macedonia Springs and Columbia Mine area along the northern boundary in the northeast portions of Section 5, the northern half of Section 4, and the southwest one-quarter of the northwest one quarter of Section 3, all in (T. 11 N., R. 14 E.), for houses, mining operations and associated scars, roads and ways; (8) the road up Globe Canyon to the Globe Mine in Section 9, (T. 11 N., R. 14 E.) and past to Summit Springs for a water tank and mining activities; (9) the road to Tough Nut Springs from the Kelso-Cima Road and the way that parallels it leading to an abandoned mine, (10) the patented mining claims in Section 25, (T. 11 N., R. 13 E.); (11) the area around Kelso, for buildings, water tanks and railroad tracks, in Section 25, (T. 11 N., R. 12 E.); (12) the pipeline road from Kelso southeast to the patented mining claims in Section 11, (T. 10 N., R. 13 E.); and, (13) the Rex Mine area in the northern portion of Section 9, (T. 10 N., R. 13 E.), for mining operations, buildings and associated scars and road. The remainder of the area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the works of man substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for both solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are outstanding due to the large size of the area, the wide variety of landforms, and the variety and density of vegetation in the area. Interior valleys, caves, canyons, and vast spacious valleys provide excellent opportunities for escape, as well as providing a variety of primitive-type experiences. The presence of limestone caverns in the Providence Mountains offers an excellent opportunity for spelunking - a relatively unique experience in the California Desert.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

This area contains sections of ecological, geological, scenic, and historical significance. Ecologically, the mountains are habitat for deer and Bighorn sheep. The limestone caverns (including Mitchell Caverns and the Cave of the Winding Stair) and the rhyolitic landforms have geologic significance. Some historic mines are located in the area.

VII. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were received. The majority of those that addressed inventory criteria supported proposed Wilderness Study Area boundaries. Roads and mining activity received further field checks and were excluded from the potential study area, where appropriate.

AREA 264

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is comprised of the Columbia Mountain and the southern portion of the Mid Hills. It is bounded on the north by the well-maintained Cedar Canyon Road; on the east, by the Mid Hills Road and Wildhorse Canyon Road; on the south, by the Macedonia Canyon Road; and, on the west, by the Cima Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is predominantly public lands with approximately 10 percent random blocks of non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This generally appears to be a low-rolling mountainous area with some exposed granite rock formations and boulders. The vegetation is predominated by a high desert sage brush community with typical dry wash riparian vegetation. The upper elevations are covered with a Pinyon Pine/Juniper forest type. The lower elevations appear light gray with mixed desert shrubs, cacti, yucca, and grass species.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has retained its primeval character and generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The Chicken Spring, Mexican Water Spring, Bullock Spring and access roads, all of which have been excluded, are substantially unnoticeable due to the screening by topographic variations, by vegetative cover, and by the large size of the area. The potential Wilderness Study Area boundaries exclude from further wilderness study the extreme northeast corner of the area, east of the way, from Section 36, (T. 13 N., R. 14 E.), south to elevation 5517 in Section 13 (T. 12 N., R. 14 E.). This corner has been affected by man in the form of ways, the Midhills BLM Campground, a windmill and a corral. Also excluded are the roads to Bullock, Mexican Water, and Chicken Water Spring. Access to these springs is from the Cedar Canyon Road.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude. The varied terrain, with secluded canyons and spacious valleys, plus the vegetative screening by Pinyon/Juniper forest provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. There are many outstanding opportunities for unconfined and primitive type of recreation. The varied terrain, vegetative cover, available spring water, and large size of the area provide abundant opportunities for unconfined and primitive type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments relating to the inventory supported the findings.

AREA 264A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by a mining/grazing access road; on the east, by the Mid Hills Road; and, on the south and west, by the Wildhorse Canyon Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land, nor is it of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This small area has many varied terrain features, such as numerous lava formations, some granitic rock formations, low, rolling hills, and some flat bajadas and valleys. Vegetation ranges from sage brush and Pinyon/Juniper forest in some of the higher areas to yucca, cactus, and mixed desert shrubs at the lower elevations.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has not retained its primeval character and generally appears to have been substantially affected by man's work. There are numerous developments throughout, including fence lines, old stock water sites, old mines, and a network of ways. Numerous maintained roads related to grazing and mining penetrate the area on all sides.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area has limited opportunities for solitude and unconfined or primitive types of recreation. The small size of the area and various works of man that exist throughout have a confining effect on the visitor. Manmade features can be seen from almost anywhere in the area and would severely limit opportunities for solitude and for a quality, primitive-type recreation experience.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments attest to the naturalness of the area. Some of the comments dispute the interpretation of roads saying that they are not noticeable nor have they been maintained.

AREA 265

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern and western boundaries are the railroad line from Cima to Ivanpah (south of Interstate 15); the eastern boundary is Ivanpah Road; the southern boundary is a combination of Cedar Canyon Road and maintenance roads used for on-going cattle operations.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 15-20 percent of this area is non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The New York Mountains exhibit outstanding scenic quality. The range forms the northeastern flank of the mountainous central portion of the East Mojave region, with the Mid Hills and Providence Mountains trending away from them to the southwest. These are the highest mountains in the region. Visual interest is heightened by the rugged pattern of the buff-colored jointed granitic rocks and boulders that make up the range, dotted with dispersed stands of Pinyon and Juniper. Pinto Mountain is a striking feature of recent volcanic origin. Vertical walls of lava that form bands interspersed with steep talus slopes add variety to the scene. The northwest side of the New Yorks is very steep where the mountains rise abruptly from the Ivanpah Valley. The southwest side presents a more gently-sloping terrain characterized by broad valleys (Pinto Valley and relatively long, broad canyons; e.g., Caruthers Canyon). Some mines and unimproved roads are located within the area, but these have only local impact due to the variety of the terrain.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

There are several portions of this area where man and his own works dominate the landscape. Grazing operations occupy extensive areas on the southern end of this area. A major ranch occupies Pinto Valley. Access roads reach stock-watering facilities in Fourth of July Canyon, Bathtub Spring and Howe Spring. In addition, an improved road reaches stock-watering facilities at the lower end of Caruthers Canyon. All of the southeast areas are in private ownership and have been excluded from wilderness consideration. Elsewhere, springs located on the northern and western sides of the range are privately owned or are utilized for ranching purposes. Such waterholes include Live Oak Spring, Cabin Spring, Cottonwood Spring, a spring in Butcherknife Canyon, and Sagaton Spring. Active patented mining operations are found in the lower reaches of

Live Oak Canyon and Sagamore Canyon on the western side of the area. Graded access roads reach these areas. Other active mining operations are found on the northeastern and eastern edge of the range within the vicinity of both Slaughterhouse Spring and Keystone Spring. A microwave communications site is located on the northwestern edge of the interior area and reached by a graded road. Patented mining properties and access roads have also been excluded at Sections 23 and 35 (T. 14 N., R. 15 E.), Sections 21, 22, 31, 32, and 3 (T. 14 N., R. 16 E.), Section 8 (T. 13 N., R. 15 E.), Sections 7 and 18 (T. 13 N., R. 16 E.). These areas were excluded from the portion which contains wilderness values. The portion which does contain wilderness values is an area where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. The interior area of the New York Mountains possesses some of the highest primitive values in the East Mojave region. Spectacular granitic formations form its backbone, and effectively limit accessibility to the lower reaches of a few of the larger canyons. Virtually no access routes penetrate it. All of the outside influences fail to disrupt the natural integrity of the interior area, which remains virtually untouched.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

In spite of the presence of numerous outside influences, outstanding opportunities for solitude are still attainable over a large portion of the range. The spectacular, complex terrain of the interior area serves as an effective screen to essentially all of the permanent improvements within the area. The resulting opportunities for solitude are probably not matched anywhere else in the East Mojave region. The rugged granitic outcrops, combined with a dense and surprisingly varied vegetation, create a feeling of an area almost totally removed from civilization. As a result, the presence of other users in the interior area may go largely unnoticed. Finally, expansive views in many directions are possible from the interior area, as the range rises well above its surrounding topography. The complex terrain described for this area offers a variety of outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of outdoor recreation. The pristine interior area, covered by complex vegetation patterns and dotted with water sources can ideally accommodate a variety of primitive types of experiences.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

The New York Mountains appear to be a truly unique feature in the California desert. From an ecological standpoint, the range is quite remarkable. It has one of the best botanical collections in the East Mojave region (over 288 species, according to Thorne). A unique stand of Rocky Mountain White Fir trees can be found near the top of New York Mountain. Caruthers Canyon may be the best botanical area in the East Mojave. Eastern, sonoran and mojavean species overlap here. A stand of locust, located at Bathtub Spring, is the only known stand in California. The Sagamore Mine, in Sagamore Canyon, represents one of the earliest mining operations in San Bernardino County. It has a long and varied history, involving a cornucopia of ore deposits. Silver mining operations were conducted by Mormons in 1870. In the 1890's, veins were worked for copper-lead-zinc. The workings were reopened in 1914 or 1915 when tungsten was discovered in the ore, and activity continued until the early 1920's. Another period of somewhat minor activity occurred in the years 1942-1945. In 1952, mining still persisted, but on a very small scale. By 1964, the camp was abandoned.

VII. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were received. These generally supported inclusion for wilderness study. Other comments pointed out the presence of mining activity and roads to springs. These were noted in the findings.

AREA 266

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The southwestern boundary is Ivanpah Road; the northwestern boundary, the railroad line from Ivanpah to Nipton; the northern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the southern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet south of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way); the eastern boundary, the California/Nevada state boundary; the southern boundary, a regularly-used railroad line from Barnwell, California, to Searchlight, Nevada.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 5-10 percent is non-public land randomly scattered throughout the area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The Castle Peaks area includes several features of ecological, geological and cultural interest. Enclaves of Arizona-type plants, as well as some coastal chaparral species occur in certain areas. The inaccessible, vertical spires of the Castle Peaks afford excellent nesting sites for raptors. Geological interest in the area focuses on the Castle Peaks themselves, a series of spires, reaching up to 600 feet above the surrounding terrain. These red-hued peaks were formed by the uplifting of the area through faulting, followed by erosional processes. The peaks are uncommon in the California desert and have significant aesthetic values. The vegetative cover is dominated by Pinyon-Juniper Woodland at the higher elevations, and dense stands of Joshua Trees on the lower slopes. A number of springs and seeps dot the landscape.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

There are permanent improvements in the southern portion of this area that have been tapped for stock-watering facilities for cattle operations based in Lanfair Valley. These roads to Dove Spring and Indian Spring cut deep into the area from its southern perimeter. Several other ways penetrate to a lesser extent. Owing to the generally complex nature of the terrain, the effect of these man-made improvements on the area, as a whole, cannot be considered significant; however, these maintained roads are specifically excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Area. There are also a few ways that extend into the central and western portions, but they are revegetating naturally and do not detract from the naturalness of the area. A water line and powerline road leaves the far western boundary at Willow Wash serving the Vanderbilt Mining Company in the New York Mountains. The active mining operation there included heavy duty machinery, graded roads, open pit mines, buildings and secondary roads. This area and the flood control dikes along the northwest border have been omitted from the portion containing wilderness values. The remaining sections generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Despite the presence of roads to stock-watering and mining operations facilities deep in the interior, outstanding opportunities for solitude may still be found over most of the Castle Peaks area. The rugged terrain of the core area effectively confines the influence of these lightly-travelled roads to a narrow corridor immediately surrounding them. The essentially pristine condition of the flanking bajada to the north, and the rolling hills to the south, adds to the feeling of solitude created by the majestic interior area of the Castle Peaks by forming an extensive area in which the works of man go largely unnoticed. This feeling is further enhanced by the outstanding views of adjacent areas that the range offers, particularly of the Castle Mountains area to the south. The highly diverse terrain offers a variety of outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of the comments that addressed inventory considerations were in support of the findings. A few others disagreed with the findings.

AREA 267

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the west by a road east of Lanfair Road maintained by the Ox Ranch; on the north by an improved road from Barnwell, California to Searchlight, Nevada; on the east by a combination of the California/Nevada State border and a high-capacity powerline maintenance road; and on the south by an underground telephone cable and associated maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 15 percent of this area is non-public land in scattered parcels.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This unit includes the Castle Mountains, the Piute Range, and portions of the Lanfair and Piute Valleys. The Castle Mountains are steep and very rugged, while the Piute Range approximates a highly eroded mesa with a gentle sloping western face and an eastern face that drops abruptly to the Piute Valley. The expansive Piute Valley is much lower in elevation than the Lanfair Valley to the west of the range. Vegetation is relatively sparse on the mountains, consisting mostly of creosote, sagebrush, and mixed grasses, while in the flat valleys and on the lower slopes it is more lush and also includes scattered cactus, mojave yucca, and Joshua trees. Dense riparian vegetation exists along the perennial stream which flows from Piute Springs, located near the southern end of the Piute Range. Color variety exists mostly in the canyons and washes of both mountain ranges where the strata have been exposed through erosion.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Portions of the unit have been excluded where man's works are substantially noticeable, thus degrading the natural character of the land. These exclusions include the area of active and abandoned mining on the western slope of the Castle Mountains where numerous, highly visible road cuts, pits, tunnels, and light-colored tailings exist, and most of the valley west of the Piute Range, which contains a network of ranching roads leading to water tanks and small reservoirs. A graded, ranch-related road which extends southward along the ridge of the Piute Range and a short road leading to the Fort Piute area have also been excluded.

The remainder of the area generally appears to have retained its primeval character and influence, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The boundary of this remaining area generally follows the original boundary to the north, east, and south, while to the west it follows the ridgeline of the Castle Mountains south of Hart Peak, edges eastward around the grazing-related road from the Hart Mine, and then proceeds south skirting the base of the Piute Range.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are provided both in the rugged mountains and in the spacious valley areas. The diverse terrain also offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The availability of water at Piute Springs enhances primitive recreation opportunities.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Of ecological, geological, and historical significance is the Piute Gorge area with its perennial water supply, Piute Springs. The creek supports dense riparian growth along its edges, attracting many species of wildlife. Man has also been attracted to the water source beginning with the ancient Indians. In 1867-68 Fort Piute was erected on the site by the U.S. Government linked to other cavalry outposts in the desert by a road, now called "The Old Government Road." Only remnents of the stone walls of the fort and buildings exist today, but the area continues to attract visitors who come to camp, hunt, and explore in the area.

VII. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments referred to the mining activity around Hart. All known mining areas have been excluded. Other comments supported inclusion of the area for its wilderness qualities.

AREA 267A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located between Barnwell and the Castle Mountains, the site is entirely surrounded by dirt roads. The northwestern edge is formed by the bed of the old Ivanpah-Searchlite railroad line which is now used for vehicular traffic. The southwestern border is formed by a dirt road which supports grazing operations. The northeastern and southeastern borders are defined by dirt roads which join in the vicinity of the Hart mine.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

With the exception of one section, the entire area is composed of public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Terrain within the site is generally uniform flat and sloping, transitioning gradually into low rolling hills. Flatlands are broken only by occasional washes. Vegetation is diverse. Joshua Tree and yucca can be found in abundance. Cholla, barrel, beavertail and other cacti, in addition to the more typical low shrubs and grasses are scattered throughout.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is used primarily for grazing. Man's work, in the form of support equipment and access ways, is evident. Water tank and water distribution equipment can be seen throughout. The naturalness of the site has been degraded to the point where it does not satisfy the minimal wilderness criteria.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The site does not possess the variety of landform and vertical relief necessary to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. Although vegetation is diverse, it is not dense enough to overcome the shortcomings generated by the flatness of the gentle topography.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments received.

AREA 267B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The triangular-shaped area is located in Lanfair Valley, just south of Barnwell. The boundaries are defined by a livestock servicing road to the southeast and northwest; the Ivanpah Road on the west; and, on the east, the bed of the Ivanpah to Searchlight railroad line, which is currently used for vehicular traffic.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site contains approximately two sections of non-public land, located along the western boundary, and accounting for approximately 10 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Landform varies considerably between the northern and southern portions. In the south, the terrain is generally flat and gently sloping and divided by washes. In the north, the land transitions into low, rolling hills which provide some visual interest and shielding from surrounding activities. Vegetation changes from creosote-dominated grassy flatlands in the south, into dense stands of Joshua Trees, and yucca, cholla, barrel, beavertail and other cactus and lush displays of low growing desert shrubs in the north.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The presence of man and his works can be felt throughout much of the area. The site has been, and is still being, heavily utilized for grazing. Ways and equipment used to maintain and support the grazing activities are evident throughout.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

In the northern area of the site, the topography and vegetation combine to offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. The low, rolling hills provide numerous areas where users would be physically and/or visually separated from one another. In the south, where the land is flat and vegetation is sparse, it becomes more difficult to experience a feeling of solitude. Overall, however, the area does provide opportunities. In terms of primitive and unconfined types of recreation, the site is not varied enough to provide an extensive number of outstanding opportunities, but it will easily support some.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received favored wilderness status for the site. However, man's impact, and the relative size of the area remained the primary considerations for eliminating the site from further consideration.

AREA 267C

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The site is located in the center of Lanfair Valley, west of the Piute Range. The site is defined by a livestock service road on the north and east sides, Ivanpah Road and a portion of a livestock service road on the west and on the south by a utility service road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired manner.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comment recommended that the area be incorporated into the wilderness study program. However, the site's size and relative condition precluded its further consideration for study.

AREA 268

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the east by Ivanpah Road; on the south, by a road to Sagemore Mine; and, on the northwest, by a road to Sagemore Mine running past Mail Spring.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments supported inclusion of the area for further study. Another comment stated that there were roads in the area. No changes have been made as a result of public comment.

AREA 269

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern and western boundaries are a water line maintenance road for cattle operation. The eastern boundary is Ivanpah Road, and the southern boundary is Cedar Canyon Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 80 percent of this area is non-public land, located in the central and northern portions.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is part of a large bajada that slopes southeasterly from the New York Mountains. The terrain contains shallow washes and small rolling mounds in a few areas, but is generally flat with little topograhical relief. The vegetation is quite diverse, with a profusion of Joshua trees and cholla cacti.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The majority of this area contains permanent improvements or human habitation. The area is also used extensively for cattle grazing, with many associated waterline maintenance roads and fences. The central portion contains permanent residences. These man-made improvements upon the landscape have affected the primeval character of the area and the imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation would be greatly restricted because of permanent improvements and human habitation throughout this area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments received noted the natural integrity of the landscape, primitive recreation potential. Other comments stressed existence of roads and other improvements. No changes were justified.

AREA 269A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern and eastern boundaries are a waterline maintenance road; the western, an access road to water facilities for grazing operations; the southern, Cedar Canyon Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 75 percent public lands with non-public holdings located in the southern and northeastern portions.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This constitutes the higher slopes of a large bajada sloping southeast from the New York Mountains. Vegetation is lush and diverse with many Joshua Trees and cholla cactus. The terrain is low and rolling with several shallow washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is used primarily for grazing. Several fences and ways traverse the area and are apparent scars upon the landscape.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation are limited by the numerous ways which are present.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments received.

AREA 270

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the north by the well-maintained Cedar Canyon Road; to the south, by a grazing road; to the west by Black Canyon Road; and, to the east, by segments of Cedar Canyon Road and the grazing road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 80 percent public land with non-public holdings occurring mostly at the northern edge.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is dominated by Table Mountain, a regional landmark, which is a small volcanic mesa. A few other volcanically-originated landforms exist within the area, together with non-volcanic landforms such as small mountains composed of rounded granite. Overall, the area embraces a small, rugged, mountainous interior surrounded by flat valleys. Vegetation varies with location, consisting of sagebrush and associated plants in the valley and lower mountain slope areas and grading up to Pinyon and Juniper on the higher slopes. Color varies with vegetation and rock types.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Portions of the roadless area have been excluded from further wilderness consideration to avoid blocks of non-public land and areas where the natural character has been degraded. Cattle ranches and their networks of access routes fall under this exclusion, as well as the mining area just south of Rock Spring where abandoned structures, shafts, slag piles, and old roads are readily evident. A short spur road, used for grazing purposes, enters the area from the south near Woods Wash. The remainder of the roadless area, which consists mostly of the rugged, mountainous interior, generally retains its primeval character. Topographical variation in this core area screens out the surrounding influences. Internally, the area is relatively pristine. The adjusted boundary generally skirts the base of the mountains to the west and north, while mostly following the roadless area boundary to the east and south.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The rugged, interior area offers many areas of seclusion and provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. Table Mountain itself is like a remote island, its steep sides barring all but a few from its Juniper-forested plateau. The area also offers outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation both in the mountainous area and in the valley and bajada areas, providing intimate and enclosed experiences as well as those of an open and spacious nature.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

All comments that addressed inventory considerations favored this area's inclusion for further wilderness study.

AREA 271

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is a combination of Cedar Canyon Road and the Gold Valley Ranch maintenance roads. The eastern boundary is Ivanpah Road; the southern boundary, a utility power structure maintenance road; the western boundary, a combination of Black Canyon Road and a water line maintenance road used for cattle operations.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 35-45 percent of this area is non-public land in a north-south strip pattern that is uniform throughout.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The unique ecological features of this area are primarily associated with the flora. Excellent cactus gardens are located adjacent to Woods Wash where it passes through the eastern portions of the Woods mountains. These cactus gardens have mixtures of barrel, cholla, mammillaria and prickly pear interspersed with very large Mojave yuccas. An uncommon stand of Old Man Cactus is also found in this vicinity. Outstanding assemblages of cacti and yucca also occur in the uplands and in the canyons near Woods Wash as it enters the Woods Mountains from the north. The area also possesses some wildlife values, with a diversity of desert bird species. Few outstanding geologic features distinguish the area, although the volcanic origin of the rugged, low-lying hills that form its core may hold some interest. The Hackberry Mountains also include some fossil and gemstone localities. Overall the Woods/Hackberry area exhibits good scenic quality. From a distance, the Woods Mountains, like so many desert ranges, appear bleak. Once within, however, the viewer is treated to a variety of interesting colors, forms, and textures. The volcanic origin of the area is displayed through blocky lava flow edges, rugged outcrops, and flat volcanic caps. The vegetation contrasts with the dark lava rocks in both color and texture. The eastern side of the Hackberry Mountains harbors one abandoned mining area. Watson Wash separates the Woods Mountains from the Hackberry Range, effectively dividing the area in two. Several old road scars parallel much of its length. The broad, gently-sloping bajada south of the interior area is used extensively for cattle grazing. Grazing-related structures occur throughout the landscape but have only localized impacts.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Portions of the roadless area have been excluded from further wilderness consideration where the natural character has been degraded. In the north, ranching operations in the Gold Valley area press against the Woods Mountains. Housing developments occur in Fenner Valley in the east. A water pipeline road to Hackberry Spings is in the north portion. A short road from the north, down Watson Wash, to a developed spring has also been excluded. To the west and south of a road serving a water tank in Section 33 (T. 11 N., R. 16 E.), are found scattered grazing operations including canals and water tanks. In the northwest portion of the area ways and old mining scars have been deleted in Sections 7, 8, 16, 17 and 18 (T. 11 N., R. 17 E.). These unnatural areas were excluded from the portion that contains wilderness values. The remaining portions of this area generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The complex topography of the Woods and Hackberry Mountains offers a variety of outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation. The secluded canyons and basins within this area create an environment where outstanding opportunities for solitude could easily be obtained.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments that addressed inventory criteria supported inclusion of the southern half of the roadless area into wilderness study designation. Roads mentioned in public comments were re-checked and added where found to meet the definition.

AREA 272

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is a telephone cable right-of-way; the eastern boundary, a major water pipeline road; the southern boundary, a powerline right-of-way and service road; and, the western boundary, the Lanfair Road that leads to the town of Goffs.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 30 to 40 percent of the area is non-public land distributed in north-south directional and uniform strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography appears uniform, but is actually diversified in several portions. The southern portion is a relatively flat bajada, sloping southward. To the north and east is a series of small to medium-sized hills, enclosed valleys, and reddish-brown and grey canyons. The valleys accommodate stands of mesquite and other river basin shrub and grass species. Vegetation on the hills is composed of sparsely uniform creosote stands. A variety of portions contain different densities of Joshua and Mojave yucca.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has a past history of a few old mining activities around Signal Hill and the Vontrigger Hills that now appear to be abandoned. Patented mines have been excluded at Section 2, 11 and 10 (T. 11 N., R. 17 E.). None of the other related impacts seriously degrade the landscape for any length of distance; for example, old jeep trails that lead to the now abandoned Tungsten Flat Mine and Leslie Ray Mine are not readily noticable. Natural revegetation is occurring. There are several ways north of Signal Hill and the Vontrigger Hills which also do not seriously affect the naturalness or integrity of this area. There is also a way that starts from the south and goes to a water tank which is presently being used for an ongoing cattle operation. Another way is paralleled by an east-west fence, but the way is revegetating. Wilderness values exist in this area which contains a variety of topographic and vegetative screening so that man and his work have very small effect on the landscape and do not seriously hinder the primeval characteristics. East of Lanfair, permanent improvements or human habitation, plus mining activities, caused a portion to be excluded from those portions containing wilderness value. The potential Wilderness Study Area boundary is common with the roadless area boundary, with the exception of the exclusion of mining activities in the northwest corner.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation can be found in the area because of the diversity of landform, vegetative screening, secluded valleys, narrow canyons, and wide plains.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most of the public comments speaking to the inventory, stated that the area was unnatural. Another comment suggested that some of the identified roads did not meet the road definition. Field examination and consultation with the rancher confirmed the findings.

AREA 273

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is a long narrow strip of land between two major utility corridors. The eastern border is a graded road built to service an underground water line and the western border is a graded road servicing two powerlines. The north and south boundaries are the Nevada State Line and a graded dirt road servicing a stock watering tank.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands, nor is it of sufficient size as to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment stated that the area was unnatural.

AREA 274

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is long and narrow and located between two major utility corridors. The eastern border is a graded road built to service an underground water line and the western border is a graded road built to service two power lines. The northern boundary is a graded road used for servicing a stock watering tank and its southern border is defined by a graded dirt access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Area is composed entirely of public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Terrain throughout the site is relatively flat and broken only by occasional washes. The site is so narrow and level that it can be looked across with little or no visual interference. The area is sparsely vegetated and the dominant plants are creosote and low growing grasses. There are scattered areas displaying yucca, cholla and cactus.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The site has retained its natural character and, with few exceptions, appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The main evidence of man's work is related to grazing activities, but is substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The size, lack of vertical relief, and low vegetation preclude feelings of solitude. The lack of physical barriers inhibits any sense of isolation from surrounding activities and degrades the wilderness experience. The shape and size of the area, with its associated sense of restriction, eliminate any outstanding opportunities for unconfined types of recreation. The uniformity of the site reduces the opportunities for challenges normally associated with primitive types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment regarding the inventory, stated that the area was unnatural.

AREA 275

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is a major water pipeline right-of-way and associated maintenance road and the California/Nevada state border. The eastern boundary is Highway 95. The southern boundary is a telephone company underground cable right-of-way and maintenance road. The western boundary is a major water utility company right-of-way and maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 10 percent of this area is non-public land, located in the northern portion.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is a large basin with large rolling hills with jagged points in the central portion. Piute Wash bisects this area in a north and south direction. Mesquite trees are found in this wash. Creosote Bush Scrub is the predominate shrub in this area. Low desert shrubs and scattered stands of jumping cholla can also be found.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The northwestern portion of this area contains a corral which appears to be maintained by local ranchers. There are also several ways that extend from the corral. These ways seriously detract from the overall naturalness.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Most of this area is gradual slope and contains very little topographic relief except for hills in the central part. There are dense portions of creosote that could provide some screening of visitors, but there are scattered portions within this area where man and his works dominate the landscape. The man-made improvements of this area hinder the potential for solitude or primitive types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments supported inclusion of the area and challenged the interpretations of opportunities for primitive recreation. Another comment said the area was unnatural.

AREA 275A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is triangular-shaped, bordered by U.S. 95 on the west; an underground telephone cable right-of-way and maintenance road to the south; and, the California/Nevada state border to the north and east.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 40-45 percent of this area is non-public land concentrated near the western and eastern boundaries.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is located in the Piute Valley, east of U.S. 95. The majority of the terrain is a bajada which gradually slopes to the west. The northern and eastern portions of this area contain a few tan-colored hills, small canyons, and light grey and tan washes. Creosote Bush Scrub is the dominant plant community, with isolated portions of yucca and cholla cactus.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has been affected by the works of man. A large flood control berm which parallels Highway 95 only a short distance east from the road. Also there are many ways in the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OR RECREATION

Although the area is natural, the size, flatness of terrain, and lack of vegetative screening make outstanding opportunities for solitude questionable because of the geological and botanical features.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment was divided evenly between excluding the area and including it in the inventory.

AREA 276

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is a utility power structure right-of-way and associated maintenance road. The eastern boundary consists of the California/Nevada state border and the California Desert Conservation Area boundary. The southern boundary is a combination of a gas pipeline right-of-way, Interstate 40, and the railroad maintenance road (southwest). The western boundary is U.S. 95.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 35-45 percent of this area is non-public lands in north-south strips and scattered parcels in the southeastern portion.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The Dead Mountains contain very rough and steep mountainous terrain with rust-colored peaks up to 3,598 feet (Mt. Manchester). These mountains are surrounded to the west by a large bajada that gradually slopes westward to U.S. 95. This bajada contains small reddish-brown washes and playas that are covered with uniform patterns of creosote, and associated creosote bush shrub plant communities such as yucca trees, scattered portions of red barrel and cholla cacti, and desert annual grasses. The northern portion contains secluded, winding canyons covered with a jumble of rocks that have interesting shapes and forms. There are also small colonies of yuccas and cacti within a small sheltered basin in this portion. The eastern portion of this mountain range contains wide, open-spaced valleys and series of very steep, jagged peaks. These peaks have eroded somewhat and have formed smaller, rocky, ridges and deeply eroded washes which blend into a moderately sloping bajada that extends eastward to the highway from Needles to Davis Dam. There are a lot of small winding canyons that attempt to bisect the heart of the Dead Mountains, but are abruptly halted by the massive rustic geologic structure of these mountains. The vegetation on the east side includes scattered densities of Creosote Bush Scrub plant communities on the bajada, and limited quantities of river basin plant communities in the washes. The southern portion of this chocolate and reddish-brown mountain range gradually tapers off in height, then abruptly ends. A small bajada extends southward and is bisected by the railroad maintenance road and railroad, which is the southern boundary.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Portions of the area have been affected by man and have been excluded from the area meeting wilderness criteria. A rock quarry and road used by the Bureau of Reclamation has been excluded in Sections 4 and 5 (T. 11N., R. 21E.). The area west of the Piute Wash near the western border from Section 16, (T. 11N., R. 20E.), has also been excluded from wilderness study. This area contains numerous ways, some from past military activities, and a large cement water reservoir which seriously detract from the naturalness of the area. In the southwestern portion, Sections 26, 27, 34 and 35 (T. 10N., R. 20E.), an area was excluded because of extensive bulldozed mining roads. The remainder of the area is affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. There is a way in the northern portion that is reverting back to nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The Dead Mountains contain areas where outstanding opportunities for solitude can be obtained. The large size, winding canyons, and rugged terrain create an atmosphere where solitude could be enjoyed without disruption. Primitive forms of recreation could be enjoyed, including the freedom of unconfined movement within the majority of this area because of the rugged winding canyons, the size, and the wide diversity of geological landforms.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Those comments pertaining to the inventory agreed with the findings. Several comments spoke to the many ways and a mine. After field checks, the appropriate changes were made. Other comments indicated the area was a popular recreation area.

AREA 276A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is an underground telephone cable maintenance road. The eastern boundary is the California/Nevada state border. The southern boundary is a utility powerline right-of-way and maintenance road. The western boundary is U.S. 95.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 30-35 percent of this area is non-public land concentrated near the eastern and western boundaries.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains a gradually-sloping bajada that slopes westward into U.S. 95. The bajada is dominated by creosote with scattered portions of native grasses and a series of light tan rolling hills with little vegetation upon them.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area consists of undeveloped land, without permanent improvements or human habitation, and retains its primeval character and influence.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation would be very restricted because of the small size of this area and the flatness of terrain, which tends to create an atmosphere where visitors would find it difficult to experience solitude or primitive forms of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment agreed with the findings.

AREA 277

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located west of Dead Mountains, the site is irregular in shape and includes approximately 45 square miles. Highway 95 forms its eastern border. The southern boundary is defined by the Atcheson, Topeka, and the Santa Fe Railroad tracks. Utility service roads comprise the northern and western borders.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This site includes approximately eight sections of non-public land. The sections generally join in a north-south direction and account for approximately 20 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The site slopes gradually in a southeasterly direction. The majority of the site is flat and smooth broken only by occasional shallow washes. In the north, the terrain becomes more varied as the elevation increases. In the vicinity south of Homer Mountain, deep washes and erosional patterns and features are found. Creosote is the visually dominant plant and is supported by uniform distributions of low desert shrubs and grasses.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The site has been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The area is used for grazing, and watering facilities are evident on the western edges. Signs of off-road-vehicle use and occasional ways can be found, but these activities have not degraded the naturalness of the site.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

With the exception of the area in the immediate vicinity of the mountain, the flat terrain and low shrubs limit the feeling of solitude. The site is void of screening needed to provide a sense of isolation. Uniformity of the terrain reduces the opportunities for challenges normally associated with wilderness-oriented recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of the comments received were in support of including the site as a wilderness study area. However, reevaluation confirms that the area does not meet minimal wilderness criteria.

AREA 277A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is a combination of a cattle fence maintenance road at elevation 2722, in Section 8 (T. 11 N., R. 19 E.), northwest to an underground telephone cable maintenance road, in Section 26 (T. 12 N., R. 19 E.) and east to Highway 95 which is the eastern boundary. The southern boundary is a utility line road right-of-way from Highway 95, in Section 20 (T. 11 N., R. 20 E.), southwest to a major utility line corridor right-of-way in Section 2 (T. 11 N., R. 19 E.) which is the western border.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 25-35 percent of the area is non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is irregular in shape and incorporates a wide variety of terrain and vegetation. Overall dimensions are approximately five miles wide and nine miles long. The terrain is dominated by Homer Mountain at an elevation of 3739 feet, a jagged, peaked mountain with deep, winding canyons and highly eroded washes. Bajadas slope toward Piute Wash and are dominated by Creosote Bush Scrub, which is two to four feet high and very dense in portions. Low-growing desert shrubs and grasses are also present. Piute Wash contains thick stands of mesquite, smoke trees, and associated desert plant species.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Most of Homer Mountain and surrounding area in the western half of the area is non-public land. The eastern half of the area has been affected by man. A ranching road from the northwest border, at elevation 2386 in Section 4 (T. 11 N., R. 19 E.) enters the area, to elevation 2286 in Section 11 (T. 19 E., R. 11 N.). Several ways extend from the corral at the end of this road. One leads southwest to an area of past mining. A shaft, tailings and scrapings occur there. Numerous ranch-related ways criss-cross this eastern area. Because of the necessity to exclude eastern portions from further wilderness study due to man's activities and to exclude one dominating private land in the western portions, the roadless area has been dropped from further consideration.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are dependent on private lands in the western half of the area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment was received which addressed inventory criteria, adding a road that divided Area 277 from Area 277A. Another comment stated the area was not natural.

AREA 278

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is the Santa Fe railroad line maintenance road and right-of-way; the eastern boundary, Highway 95; the southern, a telephone line maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 30-35 percent of this area contains non-public land in north-south strips of public-private ownership.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The terrain is generally flat with a few small light tan rolling hills with shallow washes. Creosote Bush Scrub is the most dominant plant, with scattered yucca in the western portion and smoke trees in the washes. There are a few dark brown hills to the south which contain small canyons and deep washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. There are a few ways in the area which degrade naturalness through visual contrast with the rest of the landscape.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are restrictive due to the generally flat topographic relief and sparse vegetation and limiting size and shape which does not provide for unconfined freedom of movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment was divided evenly between excluding and including the area in the inventory.

AREA 278A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The site is long and narrow and runs in an east-west direction. Its boundaries are formed by a gas line service road on the south; a powerline maintenance road and right-of-way on the west; Highway 95 on the east; and, another utility pole service road on the north.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This site includes approximately six sections of scattered nonpublic lands accounting for approximately 30 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The terrain is generally flat in the western end and gradually develops into undulating, low rolling hills with shallow washes in the east, approaching the Dead Mountains. Vegetation is limited to creosote, desert shrubs and grasses uniformly distributed throughout. Yucca can be found sparsely scattered in the western portion.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The natural condition of the area has been preserved. It has been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are limited. Flatness and uniformity of terrain in the west, in addition to low, sparse vegetation, precludes any sense of isolation. In the low rolling areas to the east, opportunities improve, but not to the point where the entire site would qualify. Many of these features that limit the chances for solitude also reduce the outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The long, narrow shape restricts movement and the uniformity of the landform restricts recreation opportunity.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment was divided evenly among those supporting the findings and those disagreeing with the findings.

AREA 279

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is a long narrow strip of land which is bounded on the north by a gas line service road; on the west, by a powerline service road; and, on the south by Interstate 40. Interstate 40 and the northern border are connected on the east by a short segment of Goffs road. The area is approximately two miles wide and nine miles long.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 30-35 percent of this area contains non-public land in paralleling north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The landform within the boundaries is varied, in spite of the small size. The eastern and western portions of the site are generally flat, broken only by shallow washes. The center of the area is occupied by foothills extending north from the

Sacramento Mountains. This central portion rises abruptly, is rough and highly eroded in portions, and provides outstanding vegetative display. The southeastern portion supports an outstanding display of Bigelow cholla, which is visible to travelers along Interstate 40.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. No permanent improvements upon the landscape were observed. There were some ways in the southeastern portion which did not seriously detract from the naturalness because the ways appeared to be reverting back to nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Any opportunities for solitude to be found in the site are restricted because of size and shape. Vertical relief is available to provide areas of isolation, but the majority of the area is flat, uniform, and lacking in vegetative screening. The size and shape of the site, plus the relatively uniform landform, does not lend itself to primitive types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment was split among those agreeing with the findings and those disagreeing.

AREA 280

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is south of Goffs and north of Interstate 40. The northern boundary is a gas maintenance road. The eastern boundary is a utility power structure maintenance road. The western boundary is Mountain Springs Road, while the southern boundary parallels Interstate 40 just north of the flood control diking system.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 30-35 percent of the entire area is non-public land in parallel north-south strips .

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains a few bajadas, small canyons, narrow valleys and several jagged mountains. The vegetation is dominated by creosote, with scattered stands of yucca, cholla, and barrel cacti. These dark reddish-brown and tan mountains are very rocky and very little vegetation grows on the slopes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

There is evidence of some old mining claims and minor activity near the southwest and midwestern boundaries. There are also several flood control dikes in the southeast portion near Interstate 40. Outside of the above areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, the majority of this area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Although there is a naturalness and diversity of terrain within this area, the opportunity to experience solitude in an outstanding manner would be restrictive because of the area's small size and lack of vegetation to screen visitors. In addition, primitive forms of recreation would be confined due to the relative small size of the area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment suggested both further study and no further study. Comment was divided evenly.

AREA 280A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is located south of the community of Goffs. The northern boundary is the road from Goffs to Homer. The southern boundary is a gasline maintenance road. The eastern boundary is a utility power structure maintenance road. The western boundary is the Mountain Springs Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 35 percent of this area is non-public land with the land ownership pattern in parallel north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is about 1.5 miles wide, and 9 miles long. This area contains steep rocky hills, small valleys, and bajadas that slope to the north and east. The vegetation is dominated by creosote with scattered stands of yucca and cacti.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature; however, there is a residence in the northwest portion.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The size, shape, and scarcity of vegetation within this area seriously hinder any attempt in obtaining outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment received agreed with the findings.

AREA 281

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This site is bordered by a powerline road and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Water District utility road to the east and west; a powerline road on the north; and, a highway/railroad on the south. The area is rectangular in shape and is approximately 1.5 miles wide and 6 miles long.

II. LAND STATUS

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands, nor is it of sufficient size as to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment received suggested the area was unnatural.

AREA 282

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located adjacent to the community of Goffs, the site is bordered on the north by a powerline service road; on the east, by an underground utility service road; on the south, by a railroad track and maintenance road; and, on the west, by a utility service road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This site incorporates approximately six sections of non-public land. Five of these sections are adjoining, run in a north-south direction and divide the site. This non-public land accounts for approximately 35 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The site is flat, generally uniform throughout and broken only by occasional shallow washes. Sloping gradually to the south, the area overlooks the Ward Valley. Creosote Bush Scrub is the visually dominant plant community throughout. Other than low-growing desert shrubs and grasses, vegetation is limited both in numbers and interest.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Generally, the site has retained its primeval character and evidence of man's presence is negligible. Other than a water tank, an area of access ways in the southeast portion, and a four-acre cleared area, the site appears to have been acted on primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The flat, uniform surface of the terrain, in conjunction with its sparse, low-growing vegetation, precludes any outstanding opportunities for solitude. Lack of natural physical barriers of any type eliminates opportunity for isolation. The topographic variety necessary to support outstanding opportunities for primitive types of recreation is missing.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment received agreed with the findings.

AREA 283

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is the utility power structure maintenance road. The eastern boundary is Lanfair Road and a telephone utility maintenance road. The southern boundary is a high pressure gas pipeline right-of-way and associated maintenance road. The western boundary is a portion of Black Canyon Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 55 percent of this area contains non-public land in a strip ownership pattern.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The terrain is relatively flat, with the southern portion of the Fenner hills in this area. The vegetation is mostly creosote, with scattered portions of cholla cacti, yucca, and mesquite and smoke trees in the washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A road enters the area from the mid-northern portion, with a fence and a way paralleling the fence. The remaining portion generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Size, shape, and general flatness make this area very restrictive for obtaining an outstanding opportunity for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Field examination did not validate comment suggesting that outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined type of recreation exist.

AREA 284

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western boundary is Black Canyon Road. The northern and eastern boundary is a water pipeline road for on-going cattle operations; the southern boundary, a utility power structure maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 30-35 percent of this area is non-public land in strip pattern.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area has an abundance of creosote in the southern portion, and cholla cacti and yucca in the northern portions. The terrain is a result of alluvial action that has eroded into small gullies and washes, and contains a few rounded hills in the midwestern portion of the area. There are a few mesquite in the washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, and retains its primeval character.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Although this area is in a natural condition, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation would be restrictive because the relative flatness of the terrain does not adequately shelter visitors from each other.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Field examination did not validate the comments suggesting that outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined type of recreation exist.

AREA 285

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located in Fenner Valley, the area is bordered on the west by Essex Road; on the north, by a gas pipeline right-of-way; on the east, by a utility line road; and, on the south, by a road which runs from Fenner, past Essex road, to the Bighorn Mine in the Providence Montains.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 30-40 percent of this area is non-public land running in parallel north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Topography is a very flat, gently sloping valley floor, naturally cut by large washes in a north-south orientation. Soil is basically whitish sand. Two areas of uplift do occur: on the west side, the Blind Hills; and, on the east, the Fenner Hills. Both areas are uplifted to about 2500 feet. Colors in the area vary from the burnt orange-brown rocky soil of the hills to the light cream-colored sand of the majority of the area. Vegetation in the area is very static. The majority of the area is sparse Creosote Bush Scrub with Brittle Bush. The more northern areas have some Cholla cacti and a few Joshua Trees. The vegetation of the hills is very sparse and, in some areas, almost totally lacking. The large washes have their own characteristics with excellent examples of smoke tree, mesquite and others.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has a few permanent improvements. A road to a cattle tank penetrates to the southeast from the extreme northwest corner. Several ways penetrate the Fenner Hills; one cutting the area in half in a northwest-southeast direction. A small area on the southern boundary has been permanently improved by water diversion dams designed to protect the nearby Interstate 40. This affects the naturalness due to the lack of screening.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are not possible in this area because of the lack of vertical topography in the majority of the area and the lack of vegetational screening which does not allow visitors to be out of view from one another.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments disagreed with the findings. Another agreed with the findings.

AREA 286

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This site is roughly triangular in shape. Boundaries are formed by Interstate 40 on the south; a railroad line on the west; Mountain Springs Road on the east; and, a gas line service road on the northern edge.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site is divided by approximately five adjoining sections of non-public land running in a north-south direction and accounting for approximately 20 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Terrain within the boundaries is, for the most part, flat. However, two areas within the site have major elevation changes: Goffs Butte (elevation 3612 feet), the dominant natural feature, and a small hill in the southeast corner. The remainder of the land is flat, sloping to the west and north. The only surface variation is provided by shallow washes. The entire site is uniformly covered with creosote, low growing shrubs and grasses with the addition of yucca, barrel cactus and cholla in the higher elevations.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The naturalness of the site has been degraded by structures and other signs of man's presence. The most prominent structure is a microwave relay tower and support equipment, located on top of Goffs Butte. In addition, a barbed wire fence runs the entire length of the northern border. Fenced-in abandoned excavations are found throughout. Within the site, the flatness and slope reinforce the impact of the man-made features.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Size, lack of topographic variation, and low growing vegetation combine to preclude any opportunities for solitude. Lacking natural screening, a sense of isolation cannot be achieved. The quality of primitive types of activities within the site is extremely limited by the uniformity of environment.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments received regarding the wilderness inventory.

AREA 287

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The southwestern boundary is Essex Road. The northern boundary is Interstate 40. The southeastern boundary is the Old National Trails Highway.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 35 percent of this area is non-public land in a land ownership strip pattern.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is relatively flat and dominated by creosote.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A landing field and two utility lines split the area north-south and east-west. These utility lines are parallel with the southeastern boundary and Interstate 40, only the lines are within the interior of this area. The remaining portion still retains its primeval character.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area's size, flat terrain, sparse vegetation, and man-made improvements, such as an airplane landing field and two utility lines within its interior, greatly restrict outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive forms of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments received regarding the wilderness inventory.

AREA 288

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the north by the Old National Trails Highway (U.S. 66), and Interstate 40. The eastern boundary is defined by a utility service road and a petroleum line service road. The southwestern border is a mine access road which divides the Piute Mountains. The southeastern border is a ranch road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site incorporates approximately 9 sections of non-public land, running in a north-south direction and comprising approximately 30 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the northern portion of the Piute Mountains and the adjacent alluvium of Ward Valley. The mountains consist of rough, rocky ridges which run in a northeast-southwest direction reaching a maximum elevation of 4165 feet. The mountains incorporate numerous deep canyons and an extensive system of connecting washes, which bisect the area. These washes are densely vegetated with low desert shrubs while the rocky slopes and higher alluvium support a lush Creosote Bush Scrub plant community. Areas with outstanding cactus displays (cholla, barrel, hedgehog) and yucca are scattered throughout. The western end of the roadless area is the mine access road which divides the Piute Mountains, while the eastern end includes parts of Ward Valley. Both of these bajadas support dense creosote communities.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

With few exceptions, the roadless area is generally free from the imprint of man's works. Evidence of off-road vehicle activity can be found near the boundaries of the site, but impact is negligible. A few ways, mainly in the northern section, run from the eastern and western borders towards the foothills. These ways either disappear or are lost in washes before they penetrate deeply into the mountain sides.

The road which provides the southern boundary supports numerous mining activities (claims, prospects) along its length, and a guzzler on the eastern end. Due to these activities, the wilderness study area boundary has been displaced to the north to insure that the remaining area does not include impacts of such magnitude.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The washes, canyons and rough landform provide topographic relief and the vegetative cover which aids in isolating areas and providing screening. Both of these factors contribute to insure areas where outstanding opportunities for solitude exist. Size and variety of terrain provide outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

As a result of public comments received pertaining to roads and mining operations, the site was reevaluated. A road, running from the Old National Trails Highway to the ranch road was added. This change divided the site into two separate units. The portions supporting mining activities have been excluded from those containing wilderness values.

AREA 288A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northeastern boundary is formed by the Old National Trails Highway (U.S. 66); the eastern boundary is a mine access road which divides Piute Mountain; the southern border is defined by a ranch road; and, the southeastern boundary is the Sunflower Springs Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site contains approximately 8 sections of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The site includes the southern end of the Piute Mountains and a large alluvial fan which stretches to the west, to the community of Essex. The mountains, which comprise about one-third of the total area, are jagged, rugged and colorful. Steep-walled canyons adjoin the washes and canyons which are found throughout. Highest terrain lies in the southern portion of the site and reaches an elevation of over 3600 feet. Vegetation varies with elevation. At the lower elevations low shrubs dominate the scene. As the elevation increases, so does the variety of plant life. Creosote Bush Scrub is the visually dominant species but, as the elevation increases, outstanding cactus displays (cholla, barrel, hedgehog) are abundant.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Mining activites are evident along portions of the northern border. Claim markers and prospects indicate recent interest in the site. On the southeastern edge of the mountain, a ranch site is maintained in support of grazing activity. An operating windmill and watering system, in addition to a maintained dirt road, attest to the existing operation. The community of Essex is located in the extreme western portion of the area. This community along with its associated ways and dumpsites detract from the naturalness of the area. The boundaries have been redefined to include only those areas containing wilderness values. The remainder of the site has retained its primeval character and appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Primitive character, variety, denseness of vegetation and rugged mountain topography combine to insure outstanding opportunities for solitude. In addition, diversity of the landscape insures numerous outstanding opportunities for a primitive type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

This site, which was originally a portion of Area 288, was reevaluated on the basis of public comments. A road, running from the Old National Trails Highway to the ranch road was added. This divided the original area into two separate areas.

AREA 289

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is triangular in shape. The eastern and western boundaries are defined by steel-structure powerlines. The southern boundary is a gas pipeline and accompanying maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is approximately 70 percent public land. Non-public holdings occur in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area boundaries encompass a portion of the Ward Valley. The area is extremely flat with creosote scrub vegetation clearly dominating the landscape.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is largely untrammeled by man. Off-road vehicle traffic is minimal. Generally, the land does retain its primeval character and influence in the absence of permanent improvements and human habitation.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The extremely even terrain and lack of vegetative screening limit opportunities for solitude. The relatively small size of the area and lack of diversity in the topography limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Field examination did not validate the public comment which suggests that outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined type of recreation exist.

AREA 290

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This elongated triangular area has as its northern border Interstate 40. The southern boundary is a gas pipeline right-of-way. The short western boundary is a powerline right-of-way.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is approximately 70 percent public lands. Non-public holdings occur in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The major landform feature of the area is the northern end of the Sacramento Mountains. Of major ecological significance is the largest concentration of Bigelow Cholla in the California desert. The mountains consist of very dark rock of volcanic origin with several examples of volcanic dikes. Elevations in the area range from 1400 feet in the sharply eroded bajada at the east end of the area to 3314 feet at Bannock, the highest peak. Washes which bisect the mountains are heavily vegetated with ironwood and mesquite. The Creosote Bush Scrub plant community, which dominates the bajada and alluvial formations, becomes a more sparsely vegetated Shadscale Scrub on the rocky elevated slopes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Within the area there are very few improvements which alter the primeval character of the land. The eastern and western boundaries of the area have been adjusted to exclude tracts of non-public land from wilderness consideration. A small prospect is located in the highly eroded bajada toward the eastern end along the southern border.

This scar is very small and well screened by the irregular topography surrounding it. There are no roads or ways into the area to reduce the apparent naturalness and no noticeable scars from the use of off-road vehicles. The area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, as man's imprint is not evident upon the landscape. Vegetation in the area is in excellent condition, giving the appearance that the earth and its community of life are undisturbed by man. The private lands at the extreme east end and along the southwest edge have been deleted.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The irregular volcanic rock formations and vegetative qualities of the area provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. Vegetative and topographic screening allow recreationists a feeling of isolation in a scenic desert setting. The lack of noticeable imprints of man's work upon the landscape afford outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments indicated rockhounding interest, potential for mineral development, unique ecological factors, and natural integrity of the landscape. The area has been retained for further study.

AREA 291

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered to the east and west by steel-structure powerlines and to the north and south by a gas pipeline right-of-way.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is approximately 70 percent public. Non-public holdings occur in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area boundaries encompass a portion of the Ward Valley. The area is extremely flat with Creosote Bush Scrub vegetation predominating.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A way crosses the southern end of the area. This route lacks evidence of recent maintenance and is of little impact to the apparent naturalness. Otherwise, the area appears largely undisturbed by man. The land retains its primeval character and influence in the absence of permanent improvements and human habitation.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The extremely even terrain and lack of vegetative screening limit opportunities for solitude. The relatively small size and lack of challenge and variety also limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Field examination did not validate the comment suggesting outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined type of recreation exist.

AREA 292

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the south by gas pipelines and associated roads, to the west by a powerline corridor, to the north by another gas pipeline, Interstate 40, and the Santa Fe Railroad, and to the east by development around Needles and U.S. 95.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Public lands comprise approximately 60 percent with non-public holdings occurring in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

A large portion of the Sacramento Mountains comprise approximately 75 percent of the area. To the east from the mountainous portion, a large, highly eroded bajada slopes toward the Colorado River. Other features are the Ward Valley at the far western edge and a small section of the very northern end of the Chemehuevi Valley. Elevations range from 500 feet near Needles along the Colorado River to 3308 feet on Eagle Peak. Vegetative types are a blend of high desert and Colorado Desert influences. The Creosote Bush Scrub is the dominating plant community with the exception of the eastern bajada where the highly alkaline soil supports a plant community more representative of Shadscale Scrub. Within the mountains are good stands of Jumping Cholla with several other cactus species represented. The Ward Valley is a typical high desert Creosote Bush Scrub community while the northern Chemehuevi Valley has large areas of desert pavement and a Colorado Desert influence with scattered Ocotillo.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

In some parts, permanent improvements detract from the primeval character of the land. South of Needles, but within the eastern border, is the Needles Municipal Airport, which includes four sections of land. A main wash from a central canyon on the east side of the mountains is diverted away from the town of Needles by a series of flood control dikes. The natural flow of water is thus diverted south of Needles, creating potential impacts on the vegetation in the area. A maintained gravel road runs between Needles and these dikes and continues further into the mountains to a quarry two miles east of Eagle Peak, near the center of the area. The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable east of the mountains. The eastern bajada is laced with numerous roads, primitive ways, and vehicle tracks both in the washes and on the desert paved areas between the washes. A utility line parallels the northern boundary from Needles northwestward. Access routes lead to mining activity on the northern end of the mountains and at the southeastern end. A portion of the area along the western boundary in Ward Valley contains mining activity with human habitations. At the southern end is a small communications site. Though portions of the area have been substantially altered by the work of man, the large central portion retains its primeval character and remains undisturbed by man's activities. Evidence of past mining in the northwest corner of the area does not significantly detract from the naturalness of the land due to vegetative and topographic screening.

The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the northern roadless area boundary between Section 21 (T. 9 N., R. 21 E.) and the northern edge of Section 2 (T. 8 N., R. 20 E.). The western boundary extends southeast and parallels the roadless area boundary at a distance of from 2 to 3 miles. The southern boundary parallels the roadless area boundary at a distance of one mile, then follows a wash northeast from Section 19 (T. 7 N., R. 22 E.) to Section 27 (T. 8 N., R. 22 E.). On the east, the boundary generally follows the base of the mountains, diverging only to exclude the quarry east of Eagle Pass. On the northeast, the boundary avoids the mining area by winding through Sections 21, 28, 27, 26, 25 (T. 9 N., R. 21 E.) and Sections 30, 29, 32, 33, and 27 (T. 9 N., R. 22 E.).

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude. These opportunities are offered in the Sacramento Mountains by the extremely irregular topography. The lower ridges of the mountains are laced with washes and small canyons which are heavily vegetated with ironwood and mesquite, providing both vegetative and topographic screening from other visitors. The terrain is irregular and scenic and of ample size to support outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments indicate that the mining in the northwest Sacramento Mountains is substantially unnoticeable; numerous ways occur along the eastern bajada; mineral potential; and, unique ecological factors. Generally, the comments supported boundaries drawn by the findings.

AREA 293

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular area is bounded by a gas pipeline/telephone line corridor right-of-way to the north; a high-capacity powerline to the southwest; and, U.S. 95 to the east.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The roadless area contains approximately 60 percent public land, with non-public holdings occurring in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is characterized generally by an open, southwestward-sloping bajada extending toward the Chemehuevi Valley from a series of low, rolling hills along the eastern edge. Vegetation in the valley consists mostly of creosote and mixed shrubs, with some scattered Mojave yucca becoming more sparse on the low hills.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is in an essentially untouched condition. Only a couple of primitive ways enter this area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Most of the area consists of open country. Little visual screening is provided by the terrain or the vegetation. As such, the area cannot accommodate very many people without greatly reducing opportunities for solitude. Also, due to the small size, the openness, the nature of the boundaries, and the shape, only limited opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are offered.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several public comments were received suggesting wilderness study area status to protect the Chemehuevi Wash drainage system. Comments differed from the findings in interpretation of the opportunities for solitude; however, no changes were justified.

AREA 294

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the west and northeast by a powerline corridor right-of-way; to the north, by a gas/telephone line right-of-way; to the east, by U.S. 95; and, to the southeast and south, by a county-maintained road and a maintained mining road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 81 percent public lands. Non-public holdings occur in alternating sections in the northern portion and in scattered sections in the southern portion.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is very large and has varied topography, ranging from steep, jagged peaks near the southern end of the Stepladder Mountains to flat bajadas that slope eastward and westward from the main mountain mass. Steep, but more rounded, hills make up the remainder of the Stepladder Mountains. Vegetative diversity is excellent, and consisting of cactus gardens in the northern portion of the mountains and ocotillo, Mojave yucca, creosote, and mixed shrubs throughout.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The Stepladder Mountains are relatively undisturbed by man. The few primitive ways which cross the area are in extremely poor condition. Vegetative density obliterates all evidence of these ways when only a short distance away. Overall, the area appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to diverse topography in the highlands; extensive vegetated bajadas; and, the lack of any noticeable impacts by man; the area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude, as well as for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Doves, quail, and rabbits abound, providing opportunities for hunting. The bajadas, the rolling hills, and the higher mountains offer outstanding potential for a variety of primitive recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments generally agreed with the findings. Many others indicated recreational interest for rockhounding.

AREA 295

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area, which includes the Little Piute Mountains, is bordered on the north by a gas pipeline right-of-way and associated road; on the east, by a powerline right-of-way; and, on the southwest, by Sunflower Springs Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 40 percent of this area is composed of non-public land, in north-south strips of random placement.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of the area is very diverse. The Little Piute Mountains are a relatively low range dominating the northeastern area. The mountains rise abruptly from the west, and contain two large upland valleys. South of the Little Piutes is a large, gently-sloping bajada of lighter-colored sand. In the extreme southern corner are three uplifted rises, the dominant one being Pilot Peak. The bajadas are cut from east to west by four large washes. West from the Little Piutes is a large, gently-sloping valley and the last vestiges of the Old Woman Mountains. The dominant plants are Creosote Bush Scrub and Brittle Bush. Other associated shrubs, and many annuals, are also present. In the flatter areas, Joshua trees and varieties of cholla cacti are present.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is essentially in a primitive and natural condition. A few prospects are located near the point where Big Wash crosses Sunflower Springs Road. However, due to the hill immediately east of this area, they are topographically screened from the rest of the area. Hence, the effect on the naturalness of the land is minimal. There is also a primitive way which runs down the west side of the Little Piutes and around the southern tip. Because of the thickness of vegetation, the impact of this unmaintained way is minimal. The area remains in a pristine natural form, free of permanent improvements and the works of man.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are numerous. Vegetational and topographic screening throughout provide excellent cover to screen visitors from one another. Because of the variety of terrain, outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are excellent.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments pertaining to inventory criteria supported the findings. Other comments addressed only study phase considerations.

AREA 296

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This rectangular-shaped area is approximately 12 miles long and only one mile wide. It is bounded along the western length by a high-capacity powerline corridor right-of-way and, on the east, by a well-maintained telephone line right-of-way and road. On the north, a short segment of a gas line right-of-way and road forms the boundary; while a mining access road forms the southern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area has a complex land status pattern due to the strip pattern allocation of non-public lands, which account for approximately 60 percent of the entire area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is a narrow section of the extensive bajada that slopes eastward from the Little Piute Mountains into Ward Valley. Vegetation is relatively sparse, consisting mostly of creosote, galleta grass, and mixed shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area, although between two utility corridors, has retained its natural character. No internal man-made features were sighted.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Neither the terrain nor the vegetation offer any visual screening. When combined with the extremely narrow shape of the area, this lack of visual screening seriously reduces opportunities for both solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment was divided evenly among those supporting the findings and those disagreeing with the findings.

AREA 297

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The southern boundary is a pipeline right-of-way and associated maintenance road. The eastern boundary is Sunflower Springs Road. The western edge is a graded gravel road which runs parallel to the Santa Fe Railroad.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Land ownership pattern consists of about 40 percent non-public land; the remainder, public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The boundaries encompass a section of gently sloping, creosote-covered alluvium in Fenner Valley. The area is covered with coarse gravel and has no topographic variation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area appears to retain its primeval character throughout, and is affected primarily by the forces of nature. Imprints of man's works are substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The terrain in this area is an unbroken plain with no major vegetative or topographic features to provide isolation or screening. Thus, opportunities for solitude are definitely limited. The terrain and relatively small size of the area limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment supported the findings.

AREA 298

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered by pipeline maintenance roads to the north and south; a graded gravel road parallel to the Santa Fe Railroad to the west; and, by a short section of the Sunflower Springs Road to the east.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is approximately 70 percent public land. Non-public holdings occur in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The boundaries encompass a section of gently sloping, creosote-covered alluvium in Fenner Valley. It is an area covered with coarse gravel and has no topographic variation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

With the exception of some small water diversion dikes which are substantially unnoticeable, the area retains its primeval character throughout and is affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The terrain in this area is an unbroken plain with no major vegetative or topographic features to provide isolation or screening from other recreationists. Thus, opportunities for solitude are definitely limited. The terrain and small size of the area limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment supported the findings.

AREA 299

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northwestern boundary of this roadless area parallels a pipeline right-of-way and maintained road. The western boundary parallels a mining access road. To the south, the boundary consists of a railroad. The eastern boundary is a transmission line corridor right-of-way and access road, and the northeastern boundary parallels a maintained dirt road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site includes approximately 58 sections of non-public land in a north-south orientation accounting for approximately 25 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This roadless area is characterized by a large, expansive creosote covered bajada and by the massive, fault-lifted Old Woman Mountains. Numerous canyons and washes penetrate this rocky, rough mountain system. Wide varieties of vegetation are found in this area, including yucca, nolinas, barrel cactus, and juniper on the higher slopes. Steep spires and rock walls, as well as the Old Woman Statue natural rock formation, dominate the north-central portion.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The majority of this roadless area is affected primarily by the forces of nature, with man's work substantially unnoticeable. The undeveloped land retains its primeval character and influence. The northern portion of this roadless area has been excluded from those areas which contain wilderness values. This area contains permanent improvements in the form of mines and associated tailings, pits, prospect holes, and houses. These structures and man-made features significantly degrade this portion. Man's work is substantially noticeable. Active mining operations and roads have also been excluded along the western portion of this roadless area. Cabins, mobile homes, bulldozed roads, mines and mine tailings all detract from the primeval character of the land. These areas are fairly isolated, however, thus the majority of this large roadless area still remains largely unaffected by man's works. The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area exclude permanent improvements and their access in the following locations: Carbonate Gulch, Scanlon Gulch, and Brown's Wash. The Study Area boundary is drawn to exclude the entire area east and north of the following points: the spring one and one-half miles west of Painted Rock; the spring and mining activity two miles west of Sunflower Spring; Paramount Spring; Sweetwater Spring; Willow Spring; and, the Florence Mine.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This large and diverse roadless area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The wide open spaces of the bajadas and interim valleys with views towards the Turtle Mountain, Stepladder Mountains, and Ship Mountains add to the feeling of spaciousness and unconfinement. The numerous narrow canyons, rocky and steep ridges and peaks, and stands of juniper all tend to screen visitors from sight of one another. The majority of this area allows freedom of movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments show general agreement with the findings. Many specific roads and mining activities were delineated and are reflected on the Wilderness Study Area borders.

AREA 299A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern and southern boundaries consist of underground pipeline maintenance roads. The eastern boundary is a portion of the road from Danby to the Florence Mine in the Old Woman Mountains. The western boundary is a portion of the road from Chubbuck to Danby.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is a bajada that slopes northward from the Old Woman Mountains and contains shallow washes. The vegetation is rather sparse. Creosote Bush Scrub is the predominant specie, although there are associated desert shrubs and native grasses present.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area's size, shape, landform, and lack of vegetative screening critically hinder any attempt to experience solitude in an outstanding manner, or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment stated that the pipeline road separating 299 and 299A does not qualify as a road and that this area should be considered as contiguous with 299. A field examination reconfirmed the status of this road as a road and no change was justified.

AREA 299B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern and southern boundaries consist of high pressure gas pipeline right-of-way and associated maintenance roads. The eastern boundary is Sunflower Springs Road; the western boundary, a portion of the road from Danby to the Florence Mine.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 40-50 percent of this area is non-public land running in parallel north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is a bajada that slopes northward from the Old Woman Mountains and contains shallow washes. The vegetation is rather sparse. Creosote is the predominant specie, although there are associated desert shrubs and native grasses present also.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This area's size, shape, landform, and lack of vegetative screening critically hinder any attempt to experience solitude in an outstanding manner, or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comment states that pipeline road separating 299, 299A and 299B does not qualify as a road and that this area should be considered as contiguous with 299. A field examination reconfirmed the status of this road as a road and no changes were justified.

AREA 300

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area includes the Ship Mountains; is bordered on the northwest by a gas pipeline right-of-way and road; on the southwest, by a railroad line; and, on the east, by a mining access road from Danby to Chubbuck which serves as access to mines located on the western slopes of the Old Woman Mountains.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 30 percent of this area is non-public land in random north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Topography includes the long, sandy, gently-sloping bajadas on the east and west of the Ship Mountains, as well as mountains themselves. The mountains have many deep canyons, rises, flat-topped buttes, crags, and spires. The eastern side is particularly impressive. The northeast corner of the range shows evidence of block-tilted hills and some sand in the form of forerunners to dunes. The northern mountains have an upland valley proceeding south. Vegetation varies with the substrata and elevation. Some of the lower sandy areas support only a sparse growth of annual grasses, while the bajadas are dominated by Creosote Bush Scrub and the slopes show little vegetation aside from the occasional clump of Brittle Bush.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

In the upland valley of the north end of the mountains lies the Vulcan Mine and a few other mines. It appears as though no current mining activity is taking place. All the mines are confined to this valley, and roads and ways are present. The improvements are enough to warrant dropping the valley from consideration as wilderness. Two other mine tunnels are located in the Ship Mountains. Both are on the western slopes. The impact of these mines has a negligible effect on the natural condition of the area. By far, the majority of the area has no improvements, and is undeveloped land retaining its primeval characteristics. There are no permanent improvements and this untrammeled area is affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude exist in most of the area. The roughness of the mountainous terrain, as well as the distances involved on the bajadas, serves to screen visitors from one another. Vegetation on the bajadas also tend to isolate visitors. Many varieties of primitive recreation are available in this area. The area is large enough to allow freedom of movement for unconfined recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments supported the findings and also identified mineral potential and possible energy exploration.

AREA 300A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located in the Fenner Valley, the area is bordered on the north by Cadiz Road; on the west by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad; on the south by a gas pipeline road; and, on the east, by a maintained mining access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 35 to 45 percent of the area is made up of non-public lands situated in north-south random strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Topography consists of a broad, flat, gently-sloping valley bottom. There are a few minor rises of red-brown rock in the eastern sections. Vegetation is scarce and consists almost entirely of widely-spaced, stunted Creosote Bush Scrub and Brittle Bush.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is essentially natural, with no permanent improvements or residences to be found. Man is a visitor in this undeveloped area, which is affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude do not exist in this area because flatness of terrain and lack of vegetative screening do not allow visitors to be screened from one another. For the same reasons, primitive, unconfined recreation is not available.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The comment received addressed availability of solitude, but was not substantiated by further examination.

AREA 300B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located in Fenner Valley, the area is bordered on the northwest by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, with accompanying road; on the east and southwest by maintained mining access roads; and, on the southeast, by a gas pipeline right-of-way.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 50 percent of this area is non-public land situated in random north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area's topography is basically flat, but a few rises are present in the western half. These reddish-brown rock formations rise abruptly from the plain and attain a height of about 1400 feet. The majority of the area, however, is a broad, gently-sloping plain which forms part of Fenner Valley. Vegetation is not extensive. Stunted Creosote Bush Scrub and Brittle Bush make up the dominant plants, and are widely spaced. Many annuals are present.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is basically in a primitive, natural condition, with no man-made permanent improvements present. A primitive, non-maintained jeep trail cuts across the southwest corner. Its undeveloped status has no effect on the naturalness of the land. Man is a visitor to this area, which is affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are not possible. The stark openness of the terrain, as well as the lack of vegetation, does not allow visitors to be screened from one another. Opportunities for unconfined recreation are not possible. Due to the area's small size and flatness, as well as the northern border railroad line, the area would tend to be confining to the visitor.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The comment received addressed the availability of solitude, which was not substantiated by field examination.

AREA 301

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This roughly triangular area is bounded to the north by an Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad corridor; to the west by Amboy Road; and, to the southeast, by a wood pole powerline corridor right-of-way.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

A complex land ownership pattern results from the checkerboard allocation of non-public lands which account for approximately 30 percent of the roadless area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes most of the extensive playa formed by Bristol Dry Lake, which is essentially flat and open. A sparse distribution of creosote and mixed shrubs covers the surrounding area while vegetation is entirely absent on the Dry Lake itself.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man-made features and developments pervade this flat, open area. As a result, its natural character has not been retained. The features include numerous salt works, including the extensive trenches and dredge piles of the National Chloride Company and

Leslie Salt Company; networks of graded roads and primitive ways; and, telephone lines. Lack of visual screening from either terrain or vegetation results in these features being highly visible throughout the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely limited by the many internal man-made features and the openness of this flat area. There are very few opportunities for seclusion. Man's works would have a confining effect.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment suggested that the southern portion of the area possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude. Field examination did not validate this comment.

AREA 302

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the north by the Old National Trails Highway; on the west, by a road to the "bolo" repeater; on the east by Cadiz Road; and, on the south, by a telephone right-of-way and associated maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land, nor is it of sufficient size as to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment supported the findings.

AREA 303

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is the Old National Trails Highway. The southern boundary is a railroad maintenance road. The eastern boundary is a maintained road from the Old National Trails Highway to an active mining area in the southern portion of the lower Marble Mountains south of Cadiz Summit. The western boundary is the Cadiz Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 30-40 percent of this area is non-public land, running in parallel north-south strips.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area encompasses the lower portion of the Marble Mountains. These reddish-brown mountains rise several hundred feet from the surrounding bajadas, and dominate the landscape. The remaining portions of this area are bajadas that gradually slope to the west, south, and east of the mountains. These bajadas include shallow washes that are interlaced with creosote and scattered clusters of associated desert shrubs and native grasses.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

There are two main portions within this area that no longer remain in a natural condition. Two ways bisect the bajada to the west and dominate the landscape, due to the lack of topographical diversity and scarcity of vegetation for screening. There is an active mining operation occurring within the very southern portion of these mountains. There are graded roads and an open-pit area that have greatly reduced the natural condition of the terrain. The remaining portion generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are restricted due to the flat topographic relief, sparse vegetation, and limiting and conformity which does not provide for unconfined freedom of movement. In addition, the majority of this area contains portions of the landscape that no longer retain their primeval character. These man-made improvements would seriously restrict any attempt to experience outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments agreed with the findings.

AREA 303A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the southeast by the Atcheson, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad; on the north, by a gas pipeline right-of-way; and, on the west, by maintained railroad access road and an unnamed dirt road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land, nor is it of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments supported the findings.

AREA 303B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern and northwestern boundary is the Old National Trails Highway. The southern and southwestern boundary is a gas pipeline right-of-way and associated maintenance road. The eastern boundary is the Danby Road from Danby to the Old National Trails Highway.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 10-15 percent of this area is non-public land, running in parallel north-south strips. The area does not have 5000 acres of contiguous public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

This area is a portion of the bajada that slopes southward from the southeastern portion of the Marble Mountains. This bajada also contains shallow washes interlaced with creosote and very scattered clusters of associated desert shrubs and native grasses.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A few ways bisect this area, degrading the primeval character of this portion. The remaining portion generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are restricted due to the flat topographic relief, sparse vegetation, and limiting size and conformity which does not provide for unconfined freedom of movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment supported the findings.

AREA 304

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area has an odd shape due to its location adjacent to the Marine Corps Base at Twentynine Palms, which forms the western boundary. Other boundaries include a graded road into the military base to the north and Amboy Road to the east. The southern border is a telephone line support road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 80 percent public land. Non-public holdings occur in a checkerboard pattern near the eastern border, with scattered sections in the western one-half.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Landforms in the Bullion Mountains vary with rock type. The mountains contain both rugged, boulder, granitic rocks, and the more rounded metamorphic rocks. A large alluvial apron slopes eastward and westward on each side of the mountains. In the spring, the Cleghorn Lakes located in the interior of the Bullion Mountains are densely covered with fiddleneck. The rest of the area has a sparse cover of vegetation consisting mostly of cholla, creosote, and mixed shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The Bullion Mountains area generally retains its natural character throughout. Terrain variation in the mountain area and the overall size of the area screen out the influences of the few man-made features located within it. These features include a few primitive ways (one leading to the Cleghorn Lakes and a few in the Twentynine Palms area) and abandoned mines (including the Copper World Mine, of which only scattered debris remains). Overall, man's influence in the area is substantially unnoticeable. Excluded from further wilderness consideration is the area around Valley Mountain where scattered mining in the interior has reduced the apparent naturalness. Around the mountain, large areas have been substantially altered by off-road vehicle use. The boundary runs through the center of the large wash at the base of the Bullion Mountain bajada from the northwest corner of Section 2 (T. 2 N., R. 10 E.) to the southern end of Section 33 (T. 2 N., R. 11 E.). The narrow strip between Amboy Road and the Marine base boundary is also excluded.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation occur within the area, especially in those portions where terrain variety provides visual screening. With both mountain and valley types of terrain in the area, primitive type recreation experiences can be either of the intimate, enclosed type or of the vast, open type. Opportunities for solitude are lacking in the small strip between Amboy Road and the Marine base boundary. No vegetative or topographic screening is available there.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments supported the findings and indicated potential for mineral and energy exploration.

AREA 304A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western boundary consists of a military base right-of-way south from Bagdad and the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base; the southern boundary is a combination of the Marine Corps base and a road running west from BM 607 in Section 9 (T. 4 N., R. 12 E.), at Amboy Road; the eastern border is Amboy Road; the northern boundary is Highway 66.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 60 percent public land. Private sections occur in strips but do not interrupt the contiguous block of public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is dominated by the volcanic cinder cone, Amboy Crater, which is surrounded by extensive lava flows. The cinder cone and lava flows rest upon the lower portion of a relatively flat bajada. Vegetation is sparsely distributed on the bajada and even more scarce on the lava flows. Creosote and mixed shrubs dominate the area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The eastern boundary of the potential Wilderness Study Area has been adjusted in order to exclude the salt extraction operations located on Bristol Dry Lake and random off-road vehicle scars adjacent to the highway. The remainder of the area generally retains its primeval character. Man's works, which include a few unimproved ways, and random tank tracks from military activity extending outside the boundaries of the Marine base, are substantially unnoticeable due to topographic variation in the lava flows and distance on the bajadas. There has been no mining of the cinder cone, so it remains relatively intact.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are provided within the area especially in those portions where the terrain varies enough to screen out the outside influences and to screen area users from each other. The cinder cone and lava flow area provide excellent opportunities for education and study.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Amboy Crater, one of the few easily accessible cinder cones that has not been disturbed by cinder mining activity, has both geological and educational significance.

VII. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments supported inclusion of the area due to the unique geological features.

AREA 305

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded to the north by telephone line and gas pipeline rights-of-way and the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad line and maintenance road; to the east, by a high-capacity powerline right-of-way and accompanying road; to the south, by Highway 62; and, to the west, by a wood pole powerline road, a section of Amboy Road, a graded road through homesteads, and the old paved Iron Age Mine Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Two distinct patterns of land ownership occur: the northern two-thirds of the area contains public and non-public holdings in an alternating north-south strip pattern; the southern third is largely public land, with non-public holdings in scattered sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area contains two immense desert valleys, Cadiz and Sheephole, each bounded by steep, but rounded, granitic mountain masses. A small portion of Ward Valley, containing Danby Dry Lake, is also located within the roadless area. The Sheephole and Iron Mountains comprise the main masses in the area, while the Calumets and the Kilbeck Hills are smaller isolated mountains. Cadiz Valley is the larger of the two valleys, but also the most impacted by man. Both valleys contain dry lakes at their centers. A small dune system is located in Cadiz Valley north of the dry lake. Vegetation is relatively sparse in both valleys, although Sheephole Valley vegetation is more lush. Creosote, galleta grass, and mixed shrubs dominate the valley vegetation. Plants are almost nonexistent on the dry lakes and on the mountain slopes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Boundary adjustments have been made in order to account for roads and to exclude from further wilderness consideration those portions where man's influence has destroyed the natural character and opportunities for solitude. The entire eastern half of the roadless area has been so excluded. Man's works in the excluded areas include numerous chemical operations on Cadiz Lake (with many trenches, dredge piles, and graded roads); salt works on Danby Lake; existing and abandoned mines (one in the northern Kilbeck Hills and one near the Iron Mountain Pumping Station, both with major surface scars and slag piles); the Iron Mountain Pumping Station; and, numerous primitive ways around Cadiz and Danby Dry Lakes, near the dunes, and southeast of the Calumet Mountains. A short loop-road associated with the Colorado River Aqueduct enters the area at the southeast corner, and a well-maintained dirt road penetrates to the heart of Cadiz Valley leading to the Cadiz Lake chemical operations. These internal man-made features, most of them highly visible due to their location in the broad, flat valleys, greatly affect the natural character of the area. The Old Patton Road, the northern half of which is now unimproved, forms the eastern boundary of the area, and is easily recognizable from the ground. The small boundary adjustment on the western edge of the roadless area is due to the exclusion of a telephone line road, the tunnels and debris of the abandoned Sheephole Mine and the private homestead north of Dale Lake. The remainder of the area, which mostly includes Sheephole Valley and adjacent mountains, is relatively pristine. Man's works, which include only a few primitive ways and one abandoned mine on the east slope of the Sheephole Mountains, are substantially unnoticeable there due to screening by vegetation and distance. This valley is one of the few remaining relatively pristine valleys in the desert.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The valley and terrain variety in the mountains offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Opportunities for solitude become outstanding with distance from the edges. The valley provides seemingly endless, unobstructed vistas of natural desert scenery, while the surrounding mountains offer even more seclusion within the many canyons and coves. The relative absence of man-made features within the area enhances its unconfined character. The main feature of this area is the outstanding opportunity for recreation which takes advantage of the vastness and spaciousness provided in a broad, sweeping valley. Sheephole Valley successfully combines a sense of vastness to the north and south, with some sense of enclosure provided by the linear mountain ranges to the east and west.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A large number of comments indicated that the potential Wilderness Study Area should be expanded. Other comments referred to access routes into the area shown as having wilderness values. No additional change was made in the findings as a result of these comments.

AREA 306

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is approximately 17 miles long and only one mile wide; bounded along its western edge by a powerline right-of-way; along its eastern edge by a well-maintained telephone line right-of-way; on the south, by the Santa Fe Railroad; and, on the north, by a mining access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Non-public land sections account for approximately 5 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area comprises a long, narrow section of an extensive bajada that slopes eastward from the Old Woman Mountains into Ward Valley. Vegetation is sparsely distributed, consisting mostly of creosote, galleta grass, and mixed shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area generally retains its primeval character. Only a few primitive ways cross its width, having little influence on the natural character of the entire area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the low, flat relief, the sparse vegetative cover, and the extremely narrow shape of the roadless area, opportunities for both solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments supported the findings.

AREA 307

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This extremely large area is bounded on the west by a well-maintained telephone line road; on the east by Highway 95; on the south by Highway 62, the California River Aqueduct, and a railroad line; and, on the north, by a maintained mining access road and the county-maintained Turtle Mountain Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Public lands comprise of all but 14 scattered sections of land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area comprises a diverse landscape, ranging from broad, open bajadas to highly eroded spires and cliffs. The northeast half of the mountain range is characterized by steep, highly eroded volcanic spires and peaks, while the southwest section has a steep, but rounded, form. Between the two mountain sections lies a large, flat interior valley that is transected by numerous shallow washes. Vegetation occurs throughout the area and is relatively lush on the bajadas which completely surround the mountains. The interior valley is dominated by fairly dense stands of creosote, cactus, and mixed shrubs. Vegetation on the mountain slopes is more sparsely distributed, except in the canyons and washes, where palo verde, acacia, and other wash-type plants add to the diversity. The Mopah Springs site is noted for its small cluster of native fan palms, being the northernmost extension of this species.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The bulk of the area generally retains its primeval character. Some boundaries have been adjusted to exclude areas where man's activities have degraded the apparent naturalness. A primitive way has been chosen as the boundary on the southwest side, thereby excluding a network of unimproved ways located west of the new boundary. Another primitive way has been chosen as a southern boundary, thereby excluding the extensive system of flood-control dikes that border the Colorado River Aqueduct. Both primitive ways used as boundaries have been utilized in the past as routes for the Parker 400. The northeast corner of the roadless area has been excluded due to the presence of an active mine and evidence of past intensive use on desert pavement by tanks and other military equipment during Operation Desert Strike. A mining area on the west side of the mountains has been excluded along with the access route to it. Cabins, metal sheds, tunnels, and tailings are scattered throughout the area. Similarly, a perlite mine on the east side of the mountains and a mining area at the north tip of the mountains have been excluded due to their impacts, which include road scars, slag piles, and old cabins. A short road also enters from the north leading to a trailer which lies to the west of Mohawk Springs. The remainder of the area is relatively free from man's influence; its natural character intact. Man's impacts, which include some primitive ways to abandoned mines and cabins (Horn Springs, Carson's Well, the entrance to Mopah Springs Canyon, and others), are substantially unnoticeable due to terrain variety and sheer distance. Overall, the area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The vastness and conformity of the area allows a relative freedom of unconfined movement. The diverse topography and relatively dense vegetation offer a degree of visual screening that allows the area to accommodate a large number of visitors without reducing opportunities for solitude. The steep volcanic and granitic cliffs and spires offer excellent opportunities for mountain and rock climbing. The presence of various springs in the area enhances its primitive recreation potential.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Turtle Mountains have not yet been studied in detail for their unique qualities but do have outstanding volcanic formations in the northeast portion. Mopah Springs carries the distinction of being the northernmost known native palm oasis. Bighorn sheep have been sighted throughout the area. Numerous historic mining areas are located throughout.

VII. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments referred to the following: presence of roads inside the potential Wilderness Study Area, mineral potential, unique geology, outstanding primitive recreation potential, and outstanding solitude. The roads were field checked and found to be ways in most cases. The narrative indicates those areas excluded.

AREA 309

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the north by Lake Havasu Road. The western boundary is U.S. 95. The southern extent is a maintained dirt road near Pyramid Butte which provides access to mines north of Savahia Peak. The eastern boundary is a maintained dirt road between Lake Havasu Road and Chambers Well.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 90 percent public lands, with non-public holdings in scattered sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of a section of the Chemehuevi Valley. The Chemehuevi Wash splits the area from west to east. This wash is heavily vegetated with ironwood, palo verde, and other typical desert wash species of the Colorado Desert. The southern slope of the valley is a highly eroded badlands of low relief. The area is sparsely vegetated with scattered ocotillo and occasional small stands of Bigelow cholla. Areas of desert pavement are also common. The north slope of this valley is of slightly steeper gradient than the southern slope, but is much less eroded. Desert pavement and scattered ocotillo are primary features though the shallow washes and rivulets have low desert shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A major competitive off-road vehicle event (Parker 400) runs along the eastern boundary and crosses the area just north of Chemehuevi Wash. This course is substantially noticeable where it bisects the area. Off-road vehicle scars also detract from the primeval character of the land along the southern boundary, the Chemehuevi Wash, and the northern bajada. The cumulative effect is significant and is evidence that the forces of nature are not the only forces at work within this area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The northern half of the area is of relatively even terrain and sparse vegetation. Screening by these factors is therefore limited, as are opportunities for solitude. In the southern half the convoluted, but shallow, badlands topography provides screening from other visitors. The area does not offer an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The topography does contain some relief, but this pattern of shallow washes and low ridges does not provide for a diversity of recreational opportunities. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are somewhat limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments recognized that off-road vehicle and other impacts existed but it was generally felt that these impacts were not sufficient to exclude this area from further consideration. There was also some interest expressed in considering this area with adjoining areas as one unit. No changes were justified.

AREA 309A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular area has as its northern boundary a steel-structure powerline right-of-way and Lake Havasu Road. The eastern and western borders are maintained dirt roads used as northern access to mining around Savahia Peak.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 94 percent public lands, with non-public holdings in scattered sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of a section of the Chemehuevi Valley. Chemehuevi Wash splits the area from east to west and is heavily vegetated with ironwood, palo verde and other typical desert wash species of the Colorado Desert. South of the wash, low ridges and short shallow canyons comprise the landscape, while north of the wash the slope of the valley presents much less convoluted surface. The area is sparsely vegetated with scattered ocotillo and occasional small stands of Bigelow cholla. Areas of desert pavement are also common.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Off-road vehicle tracks and trails are evident along the borders, especially along the powerline and Chemehuevi Wash near West Well. This activity is substantially noticeable. Though not severely impacted, these effects may be seen through much of the area. The primeval character of the land has been altered.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The relatively even terrain and sparse vegetation do not offer adequate screening from other visitors to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The low relief of these washes and low ridges do not offer any diversity in recreational opportunities. Thus, outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are apparently lacking.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Few comments were received. Most dealt with study phase considerations; others recognized ORV impacts, but felt that these were substantially unnoticeable and that the area should not be dropped from wilderness study. No changes were made.

AREA 310

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the north by maintenance roads associated with a large interstate gas pipeline right-of-way. U.S. 95 comprises the western border. The southern border is a powerline right-of-way and Lake Havasu Road. The eastern border is a combination of the Chemehuevi Indian Reservation and the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge boundaries.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 60 percent public lands, with non-public holdings in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

From the boundary near the Colorado River, the Chemehuevi Mountains, which are the dominant physical feature, rise abruptly through a convoluted series of highly eroded and vegetated washes containing smoke trees and mesquite. The mountains consist of a high ridge with 18 peaks over 2500 feet in evaluation. The west side of the mountain ridge drops abruptly to the desert floor at 2000 feet, which is the northeast slope of Chemehuevi Valley. The upper edge of the valley is rocky, irregular, eroded, and is densely vegetated with Bigelow and buckhorn cholla, barrel cactus, and several other small cactus varieties. Ocotillo is also numerous in the area. From the Chemehuevi Valley, the mountain ridge appears to be light gray in color and very abrupt.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A small area in the extreme southeast corner along the Lake Havasu Road has been affected by man and is excluded from further wilderness study because of off-road vehicle scars. The remainder of this large area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. An unmaintained jeep trail splits the area running from the west boundary through the mountains and Trampas Wash to the Colorado River. This way has a substantially unnoticeable effect upon the primeval character of the land, as the trail is located in the sandy washes. There are a few big-game guzzlers in the central portion. An unmaintained way on the west side of the small Sawtooth Range has little effect upon the naturalness of the area, as the surrounding vegetation screens it well.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The outstanding vegetation and convoluted landscape with huge canyons, washes, and tall ridges and peaks, provide maximum screening and isolation from other visitors. The area could absorb a large number of visitors and still provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area offers a variety of challenging terrain for a diversity of outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments dealing with inventory indicated the existence of the jeep trail through Trampas Wash. Other comments were in agreement with findings.

AREA 310A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the northwest by U.S. Highway 95; on the south by a maintained pipeline and utility line right-of-way; and, on the northeast, by a maintained road going northeast.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 45 percent of the area is random non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of broken alluvial fans extending to the northeast from the Chemehuevi Mountains, containing numerous washes. The area is relatively flat with slight rises and hills. The soil is basically rocky and ranges in color from the light underlying white sand to the dark gray of the alluvium. Vegetation consists of Creosote Bush Scrub and associated species such as Brittle Bush and many annuals. The vegetation is relatively sparse, with the dominant creosotes being regularly spaced at intervals of approximately 25 feet.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The natural condition of the land has been severely altered by man's work. Many roads extend into the area in various directions, and bulldozing scars are present. These roads are maintained by the pipeline company which has gaging stations at two points on the border. Man is not a visitor to this area and, although being affected primarily by forces of nature, the area is not free of permanent improvements in the form of roads.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Solitude is not obtainable in this area. Roads are visible due to the slight unevenness of the terrain, thus detracting from a wilderness experience. Unconfined and primitive types of recreation are severely curtailed due to terrain and size.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comment supported the findings.

AREA 311

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular-shaped area is bordered on the north by Lake Havasu Road; on the east by the boundary of the Chemehuevi Indian Reservation; and, on the south, by a powerline right-of-way and associated road running east to Parker Dam.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 100 percent public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area immediately surrounds the mouth of Chemehuevi Wash just before entering Lake Havasu. The basic topography consists of low, rounded hills which are cut periodically by washes extending in a northeast-southwest orientation. The hills have been deeply eroded, forming many small gullies which give it a "badlands" type topography. Soil is relatively sandy, with rocks of moderate size forming a slight covering of desert pavement. Overall colors range from the dark brown covering to the stark white of exposed sand. The sandy washes can be quite large and 3560 feet deep. At the northwest corner of the area is an uplift of sharp rises. The tallest of these rocky outcrops attains a height of 1223 feet. Vegetation is variable, but is nowhere very dense. The small channels of the badlands areas support Shadscale, Scrub, while an occasional Ocotillo is found on the tops of these areas. Annuals appear to be dominant in these areas. The washes have more extensive vegetation, which is characteristic of such areas. Plants in the washes would include Desert Ironwood, mesquite and others.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area remains in essentially natural condition with a few important exceptions. The whole area has received use by off-road vehicles. The impact of these vehicles is in localities heavy with desert pavement which has been torn up and the underlying sand exposed. This could allow for quick erosion, and present erosion was seen. The washes and sandy areas seem to be particularly used, but they have the ability to heal after the first good rain. Many tracks can be seen penetrating in all directions from the borders. It appears that the farther one gets from Havasu Lake Landing, the lighter the vehicle impact. A current mine operation is located on the western end of Hill 1223, and the local impact of this operation is noticeable from most of the western corner of the area. The mining appears to be of the strip-mine variety. An access road has been graded to it from Lake Havasu Road, penetrating in a southeast direction.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Solitude is easily obtained in the eastern sections of the area, due to the topography. Screening from other visitors can be quickly achieved. The western sections, however, do not allow solitude due to the evenness of the terrain and the inability of the land to screen visitors from one another. Also, the visual sight of the mine in this area would not allow a feeling of solitude. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation do not exist in most areas of the roadless area. The impacts from off-road vehicles would frequently be encountered.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several comments were received. The majority acknowledged some degradation of natural values resulting from vehicle use; however, that the Chemehuevi Wash was considered a prime example of a major desert ephemeral wash system which should be studied further. Further field examinations did not justify any changes.

AREA 312

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangle-shaped area contains the Whipple Mountains; is bordered on the north by a powerline road; on the south by the Colorado River Aqueduct and the Copper Basin Reservoir roads (Bowman's Wash Road); and, on the west, by a maintained mining access road, which runs just east of Chamber's Well.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About five or six randomly spaced sections in the area are non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of the area is basically that of steep desert mountains of brick-red rock, naturally cut by deep steep canyons. Many spires, pinnacles, and eroded rock forms are visible throughout the area. Whereas most of the mountains tend to be steep, the canyons and washes tend to be wide and sandy. Vegetation is highly variable, with Creosote Bush Scrub and Brittle Bush. Many species of cactus are present throughout the area, including Foxtail cactus, Bigelow cholla and Mojave Prickly-Pear. On the extreme eastern point, a few natural stands of Saguaro cactus are found. Although not extensive, this is one of only two or three such stands in the State of California. Desert riparian communities are well represented with locally dense growth of mesquite, Palo Verde and Ironwood.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A few roads and ways penetrate the area from the Colorado River Aqueduct leading to both active and abandoned mines, including a patented mine at Section 29 - 30 (T. 3 N., R. 25 E.). As a result of these permanent improvements, the boundary of the roadless area in the south has been drawn to exclude these activities of man from further wilderness study. Primitive ways are also present in the northwest corner of the area. Due to their primitive nature, and topographic screening by the hills around them, impact is minimal and does not affect the naturalness of the land. The majority of the land is in an undeveloped state, with no permanent improvements. Because of the roughness of the terrain, the area is undisturbed by man and is affected primarily by the forces of nature. This area retains its primeval character and influence. The potential Wilderness Study Area boundary coincides with the roadless area boundary with the exception of the excluded mining area in the south.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude exist throughout the area. The ability of the land to topographically screen visitors from one another by steep canyon walls and eroded peaks and hills is exceptional. Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are present. The aspects of terrain and the large size of the area insure that the visitor will experience freedom of movement unhindered by physical boundaries.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several public comments were received which agreed with the findings, but stated that the southern boundary should be the Colorado River Aqueduct. No changes were made due to extensive mining activity between the southern boundary of the potential Wilderness Study Area and the northern boundary of the Aqueduct. Other public comments addressed study phase considerations.

AREA 313

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the west by U.S. 95; on the south, by the Colorado River Aqueduct and roads leading north to Savahia Peak; on the east, by a mining access road passing Chamber's Well; and, on the north, by a mining access road leading to the Gold Hill and other associated mines.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Four or five randomly-spaced sections in the area are non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes the southwestern end of the Whipple Mountains, as well as the bajadas to the south and west of the range. Topography is varied, ranging from the steep slopes and canyons of the orange-red mountains to the gently sloping bajadas. Savahia Peak dominates most of the skyline of the range, with its large black form visible from most of the area. Vegetation is varied, depending on the substrate. The bajadas support moderately thin growth of Creosote Bush Scrub and associated shrubs. The steeper slopes appear to be free of vegetation, while the washes support their own characteristic type of vegetation, including ironwood. The northern area contains dense stands of Bigelow cholla cactus.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The natural condition of the area has been severely altered by man's work. The northwest section has been heavily used by off-road vehicles. Scarring is quite noticeable. The scars consist of tracks running in all directions, but no erosional damage was observed. The northeast section, the entire northern boundary, and the area around Savahia Peak show extensive mining use, numerous roads and fresh bulldozing scars. Tailings of various sizes are to be found around the tunnels, and piles of debris are found around some of the small open-pit operation. The extensiveness of the operations is such that the area has been heavily disturbed by man, who is not just a visitor to the area. Throughout this area, diggings and claim markers are visible. The impact from these rock piles and posts is minimal, however. Once removed, evidence of their presence would be slight. The mining operations are such that the land no longer retains its undeveloped and primeval character, but has permanent improvements and/or human habitation. The bajadas on the west and south of the area are in essentially natural condition, with only light vehicle tracks penetrating the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude are possible due to the topographic structure of the mountains. However, due to the close proximity of such areas to the numerous mining operations, solitude could be obtained only in some of the more rugged canyons. However, a mine impact would not be far away. The area could be used for primitive types of recreation; however, due to the smallness of areas in which solitude could be obtained, the ability to screen visitors from one another would be practically nonexistent. Outstanding opportunities for solitude do not exist.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received agreed with the findings that the area did show evidence of man's work; however, some comments stated that these impacts were not sufficient to drop the entire area from consideration. No changes were justified.

AREA 317

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located just south of the Whipple Mountains, the area is bordered on the south by the Colorado River Aqueduct and road; on the northeast and northwest, by maintained mining access roads.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 8 percent of the area is composed of randomly spaced non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography consists of small eroded hills broken by small gullies and a few larger washes. Soil is light-colored and basically sandy in texture. Vegetation in the area is fairly scarce, and consists of varieties of cholla cacti, including some stands of Bigelow cholla. Other plants include Brittle Bush and Creosote Bush Scrub. The washes support their own characteristic vegetation, including mesquite, ironwood and smoke tree.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Random off-road vehicle scars are present throughout the area. These scars degrade the area so that the overall impression is not one of naturalness.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive unconfined recreation are not to be found in the area. The area's small size tends to give visitors the feeling of being confined, and the lack of vegetational and topographic screening does not allow visitors to be out of sight and sound of each other.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments did not agree with the findings. Evidence of man's work was acknowledged; however, it was not considered sufficient enough to drop this area from further consideration. Some comments indicated an interest in combining this area with adjoining areas.

AREA 318

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the north by Highway 62; on the west, by U.S. 95; on the south, by a transmission line corridor right-of-way and access road; and, on the east, by a maintained road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area contains one section of non-public lands, accounting for approximately 11 percent of the total.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is relatively flat with some undulation derived from small, rolling hills and desert washes which dissect the open bajada. Creosote, palo verde, and ironwood are all found within this area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Scars created by past mineral activity have degraded the natural condition of this area. A small wood pole line penetrates this area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are somewhat restricted due to the confining nature of the mining activities and the lack of topographic relief and vegetative screening.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment received acknowledged the presence of mining impacts but disagreed with the findings. No changes were justified.

AREA 319

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the south by the Colorado River Aqueduct; on the west and east, by roads running to Savahia Peak and the mines there.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains less than one section of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of the area consists of low, naturally broken hills of desert pavement. There is a general drop in elevation from north to south, but the area is generally horizontal in appearance. Soil of the area is sandy, and is overlaid by a fine coating of desert pavement. Plant life in the area is slightly variable. The pavement area supports a sparse growth of Creosote Bush Scrub and Brittle Bush. Cholla cacti are also present in this area. The washes which cut across the area have their own characteristic vegetation which includes mesquite, ironwood and others.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has been used frequently by off-road vehicles, and as a result, the desert pavement has been disturbed, leaving tracks of white underlying sand and showing disturbance by man. Erosion in some of the tracks runs up the sides of the washes and other steep areas.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are not to be found in this area. Due to the scarcity of vegetation, as well as the lack of topographic features and the small size, visitors would find it hard to be out of sight and sound from one another. Outstanding opportunities for primitive, unconfined recreation are likewise lacking. The smallness of the area, combined with the off-road vehicle scarring, tends not to allow visitors to experience a freedom of movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment received acknowledges the presence of off-road vehicle impacts, but disagrees with the conclusions that these impacts are sufficient to drop the area from further consideration.

AREA 320

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This roughly triangular area is bounded to the northwest by Highway 62; to the northeast, by U.S. 95; and, to the south, by an Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad line and an associated flood control diking system.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Only a few non-public land sections exist in the area, accounting for approximately 5 percent of the entire area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area can be characterized as essentially flat, having a total relief of less than 300 feet in the form of an alluvial slope descending to the southeast. Vegetative cover in the area consists of sparse creosote coverage and scattered clumps of ironwood.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area retains an essentially natural condition. One railroad access way penetrates the area from the north and some apparently abandoned dwellings are located along the northeastern boundary, but the central portion of the area is relatively untouched.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The lack of visual screening from either terrain or vegetative variety, combined with the small size of the area and the nature of its boundaries, offers limited opportunities for either solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment disagreed with the findings related to solitude; however, no changes appeared justified.

AREA 321

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the northeast by U.S. 95 and to the east, by California Desert Conservation Area border; to the south, by an agriculture-related road; and, to the west, by Midland Road and a wood pole powerline corridor.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 95 percent public land, with non-public land sections scattered throughout.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Two distinct mountain ranges form the core of the area: The Big Maria Mountains occupy the southern end; a smaller range, the Riverside Mountains, occupies the northern end. Both ranges are rugged, wild, and largely inaccessible except by foot travel. A variety of colors are displayed on the rocky, near-vertical slopes, especially in the Big Maria Mountains. Vegetation is mostly confined to the washes and canyons and consists chiefly of palo verde, ironwood, and acacia trees as well as mixed shrubs. Large bajadas, bisected by numerous washes, surround the two mountain ranges, much of their surface covered with desert pavement. The ironwood tree dominates the scenery here, although palo verde, acacia, creosote, and mixed shrubs co-exist.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Boundary adjustments have been made for the California Desert Conservation Area boundary and to exclude those areas where the actions of man have degraded the natural character of the land. As a result of the exclusions, the area has been divided into two distinct units that meet the Wilderness Act criteria. Most noticeable of the man-made developments in the area are the active quarry operations on the southwest slope of the Big Maria Mountains. These operations, which remove desert varnished stone for use in decorative purposes, leave highly visible surface scrapings on the slopes. They are reached by graded access roads from Midland Road. Other exclusions include some gravel pits on the south and east sides of the Big Maria Mountains; active and abandoned mining operations with associated networks of roads and ways in the northwest Big Maria Mountains and in the area just west of the Blythe Intaglios; a series of unimproved ways leading to abandoned mining operations in the Slaughter Tree Wash area; an area heavily scarred by vehicle use on desert pavement between the two mountain ranges; and roads, ways, quarries, and patented mines around the perimeter of the Riverside Mountains. The areas that have not been excluded generally retain their primeval character. Man's works are substantially unnoticeable due to terrain variation and vegetative screening. Much of the interior areas of both mountain ranges are essentially pristine. The adjusted boundary of the Big Maria Mountains generally follows the base of the mountains, taking to the ridgelines wherever mining on slopes occurs. At the south end it follows a primitive way southward to the edge of Palo Verde Mesa, then eastward along the edge, and north along a road to a quarry operation and past until it again meets the base of the mountains. On the north, the boundary leaves the base of the mountains along the 1000 foot contour, proceeding west to the woodpole powerline road. The adjusted boundary of the Riverside Mountains generally follows the base of the mountains to the west and south. It follows the California Desert Conservation Area boundary to the east, while to the north it follows ridgelines around patented and abandoned mines and quarries. On the northwest it follows the Old Blythe-Vidal Road.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The rugged interior areas of the Big Maria and the Riverside Mountains offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. These areas are essentially pristine and relatively inaccessible. In addition, the complex terrain serves as an effective screen for outside influences, even quarrying operations in the Big Maria Mountains immediately adjacent to the interior area. The mountains are highly dissected, creating a complex landscape that multiplies the opportunities for a personal sense of seclusion. While being more limited in opportunities for solitude, the outlying bajada areas provide a sense of vastness and effectively combine with the mountain ranges to create an expansive area in which the works of man go largely unnoticed. Opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are also outstanding. In the mountains, the complex terrain is capable of accommodating a fairly large number of visitors. Recreation opportunities in the outlying area are more limited. However, such areas are readily accessible, and the somewhat varied terrain may be ideal for certain primitive recreation experiences.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

The route of a major Indian trail, connecting the Colorado River with the Pacific Coast, crosses the southern portion of the Big Maria Mountains. Prehistoric cultural sites are located near the northwest end of the range. The area adjacent to the Colorado River is scattered with numerous archaeologic sites, some of which may be highly significant.

VII. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of the public comments supported the findings. Other comments deal with mineral potential which is a study phase consideration.

AREA 322

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The triangular area is bounded to the north by Highway 62 and a railroad; to the southeast, by a wood pole powerline right-of-way and maintenance road; and, to the west, by Midland Road and the Santa Fe railroad.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains a few widely scattered non-public land sections, which account for approximately 10 percent of the entire area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes most of the broad, flat plain of Rice Valley, as well as the adjacent, low and rolling West Riverside Mountains and the northwestern tip of the steep, rugged Big Maria Mountains. The Rice Valley dunes, a system of fairly small dunes approximately 30 feet in height, form a long, narrow band through the middle of the valley. Vegetation is sparse throughout, consisting mostly of creosote, galleta grass and mixed shrubs with some ironwood and palo verde in several of the shallow washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A large, central portion of the area is relatively untouched by man, has generally retained its natural character and has been identified as a potential Wilderness Study Area. In other portions, though, concentrations of man-made developments have degraded the natural character. Such developments include the network of improved roads to active mines (surface scraping and tunnels) on the south slope of the northwest Big Maria Mountains; private land, tank tracks, and the series of deteriorating paved pathways in the area around Rice and the old Rice Airport; the network of unimproved ways west of the West Riverside Mountains; and the mining in the West Riverside Mountains. An area north of the sand dunes is posted by the Army with signs warning of unexploded underground ordnance. The adjusted boundary follows the ridgeline of the northwest Big Maria Mountains on the south, the wood pole powerline on the southeast, and the primitive way cutting diagonally across Sections 5 and 9, (T. 25, R. 22 E.), and Section 31, (T. 15, R. 22 E.), on the east. The northern boundary follows the southern edges of Sections 25 through 27, then drops to the northern edge of the sandy area, while the western boundary skirts around the non-public land in the northwest corner and then follows the railroad.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The central portion of the area provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Vast, open spaces and the long stretch of undulating sand dunes enhance feelings of remoteness and offer freedom of unconfined movement as well as a variety of primitive recreation activities.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

An overwhelming number of comments favored the inclusion of this previously-excluded area for further wilderness study, based on the naturalness and the isolated nature of the central portion.

AREA 323

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This long, narrow area is bounded on the north-east by the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad line; on the southwest by the county-maintained Rice-Midland dirt road; and, on the southeast, by a maintained road connecting a mine quarry and the Rice-Midland road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists mostly of public land, with only one section of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is relatively flat in landform, comprising a small section of the extensive Rice Valley. Vegetation is sparsely distributed, consisting mostly of creosote, galleta grass, and ironwood trees in the washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The interior of this narrow area shows very few effects of man's impact. An unimproved way cuts across its southern end, but has little effect on the naturalness of the entire area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area is small in size, has a long, narrow shape (only 3 miles at widest portion), and neither vegetative nor terrain variation to provide visual screening. It would be extremely difficult to find seclusion within the area. Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Few comments were received, but did indicate some interest for wilderness designation.

AREA 324

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded by the paved Midland Road to the east; the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad to the west; a wood pole powerline access road to the south; and, a graded access road to the Inca railroad siding to the north.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains only one section of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is essentially flat and covered by a heavily varnished desert pavement. Vegetation consists mostly of scattered creosote, ironwood, palo verde, and ocotillo, with especially heavy concentrations of Ironwood and Palo Verde in the numerous shallow washes that transect the area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Evidence of human impact is minimal, being confined to a few vehicle tracks in the desert pavement. Overall, the area has generally retained its natural character.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area has a narrow shape, and neither vegetation nor terrain provide any visual screening. Therefore, it would be extremely difficult to find seclusion. The area also offers little opportunity for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

One comment agreed with findings and another one didn't.

AREA 325

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This immense area is bordered to the west by Highway 177; to the north, by Highway 62 and the Colorado River Aqueduct; to the east, by the graded Rice-Midland road, the Atcheson, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad, and a gas pipeline right-of-way; and, to the south, by Interstate 10 and a powerline and gas line right-of-way corridor.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is over 90 percent public land. Non-public holdings are scattered except for one fairly large block near Palen Dry Lake.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

A few roads penetrate the area, including the old Arlington Mine road from the east, and others to active claims from the south and west into the Palen Mountains. The Palen-McCoy area embraces a series of rugged low-lying mountain ranges and broad valleys laced with ironwood washes. Four distinct mountain ranges form the core of the area. The Palen Mountains form a sizeable mass of metasedimentary and metavolcanic rocks, with considerable evidence of striations. The McCoy Mountains appear as a ridge-like mass of metasedimentary rock, again displaying a somewhat stratified appearance. To the north of these ranges rise the Little Maria Mountains, a small, but complex range composed predominantly of limestone. The Granite Mountains, a steep mass of bouldery, granitic rock, rise to the north of the Palen range. The vegetative covering of these ranges is uniformly sparse, consisting of Brittle Bush and Creosote Bush Scrub for the most part. One extensive interior valley is found in the area between the McCoy and the Palen Ranges. This valley is characterized by extensive, rolling bajadas of varnished desert pavement bisected by a complex system of sandy washes that support sizeable stands of ironwood. The edges of the Palen-McCoy area embrace portions of several broad desert valleys: Palen Valley, west of the Palen and Granite ranges, may be characterized as a large alluvial outwash plain; Palo Verde Mesa, east of the McCoy Mountains, represents part of an old river terrace; and Arica Valley, to the north of the core ranges, may generally be described as a large, open desert valley. All of these valleys may be characterized by rolling bajadas of desert pavement bisected by numerous sandy washes that support communities of ironwood, palo verde, and smoke tree. Palen Valley also contains a dry lake and a small, but extensive, system of sand dunes. The area also includes the Arica Mountains, a small, isolated range that is distinguished by a sand-swept west side and rugged east side with unusual erosional forms.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Boundary adjustments have been made in order to exclude areas where man's impact negates both the natural character of the land and opportunities for solitude. Large areas laced with roads to active and abandoned mining operations, taking the form of tunnels, shafts, quarry pits, and surface scraping for ornamental rock, have been eliminated from further study. Such areas include the Arica Mountains, the south slope of the Little Maria Mountains, the southern McCoy Mountain area and the area east of the McCoy Mountains, the Arlington Mine area, and the Palen Pass Area. Other exclusions include: sites intensively used by Patton's tank corps, where large areas of desert pavement have been severely disturbed (especially between Palen Pass and the Arlington Mine Road); community developments and large tracts of non-public land around Desert Center; an area laced with roads constructed by Patton located north of the Granite Mountains; and a road to a quarry pit in Section 3 (T. 25 R. 18 E.), northeast of the Granite Mountains. The remainder of the area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. Topographic variation throughout, and vegetative screening in the valleys, serve to reduce the impact of internal man-made features. Therefore, man's works, which include a few primitive ways, some abandoned mines, and Patton's tank tracks on some desert pavement areas, are substantially unnoticeable. The interiors of the Palen and Granite Mountains are especially pristine. The adjusted boundary follows the roadless area boundary to the south, then skirts around non-public land and follows an unimproved way to the abandoned mining sites in the McCoys. The boundary proceeds northwest, encircles the Palen Pass/Patton area excluding patented mining claims at Section 24 (T. 3 S., R. 18 E.), follows the ridgeline of the

Little Maria Mountains to a 2400 foot peak, then angles off northeast to meet the Rice-Midland Road at Section 12 (T 3 S., R. 20 E.). It follows the road northwest, skirts around the west side of the Arica Mountains, then northwest to the Colorado River Aqueduct property. The boundary then proceeds southwest across the southern edge of Section 9 (T 1 S., R 9 E.), to the north tip of the Granite Mountains where it joins with the western roadless area boundary. The boundary then diverges from the roadless area boundary from Section 36 (T 3 S., R. 16 E.) to the southern boundary to avoid a large block of non-public land.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are provided. The topographic variation within the mountains and the vegetative cover on the valley floors serves to screen out most outside influences as do the dense ironwood stands.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Dense ironwood washes lacing the interior valley area may contain the largest concentration of ironwood trees in the California desert, as well as what may be the largest individual specimens yet found. The sandy bottom of the Palen Valley area supports heavy concentrations of desert lily and other annuals capable of producing outstanding floral displays in the spring. The BLM's Desert Lily Natural Area, dedicated in 1968, is included within the area's boundaries. No known rare or endangered species are found in the area. A herd of 15 Bighorn sheep is native to the Granite Mountains and transient in the Palen Mountains. Also, the Arica Mountains and Little Maria Mountains are known raptor nesting areas. Finally, the dune areas are habitat for the Mojave Desert Fringe-Toed Lizard, a sensitive species. McCoy Springs, at the base of the McCoy Mountains, has been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places. Areas adjacent to Ford Dry Lake and Palen Dry Lake appear to contain significant archaeologic resources, as they have yielded a variety of artifacts thus far. A large portion of the Palen/McCoy area was used by Patton's Army during the 1940's for maneuvers. Palen Pass served as a marshalling area and evidence of much of this use remains. Elsewhere, foxholes dug in desert pavement remain. Near the McCoy Mountains, ruins of stone camp houses still stand.

VII. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments agreed with the findings. A large number urged the inclusion of the area north of the Little Maria Mountains and east of the Granite Mountains in the potential study area. This area has since been included. Other comments dealt with roads and mining activities which were excluded from the potential study area after further field checking.

AREA 325A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This roughly triangular area is bounded to the north by Highway 62; to the south by the Colorado River Aqueduct; and, to the west, by a graded access road from the highway to the aqueduct.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains non-public land which accounts for approximately 40 percent of the total land and is associated with the Colorado River Aqueduct.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is approximately 5000 acres in size and has a flat, sandy landform. Vegetation is sparsely distributed and consists mostly of scattered creosote and mixed desert shrubs. Tamarisk trees line some sections of the aqueduct.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Although a number of primitive ways penetrate the area, the general appearance is that of having an overall natural condition. No other man-made features were noted within the area.

V. OUTATANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The small size of the area and the absence of visual screening from vegetative and landform features limit opportunities for solitude within the area. For the same reasons, opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are also limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment supported the findings.

AREA 325B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the west by a gas pipeline maintenance road; to the east, by a wood pole powerline maintenance road; to the south, by Interstate 20; and, to the north, by the Arlington Mine Road and the Atcheson, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 30 percent of the area contains some widely scattered non-public land sections on the Palo Verde Mesa, in the vicinity of Blythe Airport, and in the Blythe Basin.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is essentially flat, and covered by a heavily varnished desert pavement. Numerous sandy, shallow washes transect the area. Vegetation consists mostly of scattered creosote and ocotillo. Some heavy concentrations of Ironwood and Palo Verde occur in the washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The southern third of the roadless area contains many examples of man's developments such as the Blythe Airport, roads, and private property. The remainder of the area is relatively free from man's impacts. Only a few primitive ways cross the area, having little effect on its overall naturalness.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

As a result of the relatively small size of the area, its essentially flat landform character, and the nature of its boundaries, opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

One comment said the area met wilderness criteria. Another did not think so.

AREA 326

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the north by an Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad line; to the south, by Interstate 10; to the east, by the paved Lovekin Avenue; and, to the west, by a wood pole powerline right-of-way and associated maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Non-public lands account for approximately 90 percent of the entire area. The remaining, public land is an area of less than 5000 acres in size and not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment agreed with the findings.

AREA 327

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This narrow area is bounded to the west by the Colorado River Aqueduct and a high-capacity powerline right-of-way; to the east, by Highway 177; and, to the north and south, by access roads from Highway 177 to the Aqueduct.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands in blocks of sufficient size to make practical their preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments supported the findings.

AREA 328

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area has an unusual shape due to its location adjacent to Joshua Tree National Monument. Other boundaries include Highway 62 to the north; the Colorado River Aqueduct to the east; a major utility line right-of-way to the southeast; and, the Colorado River Aqueduct to the west.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists mostly of public land. Non-public land parcels are few and widely scattered, except along the Colorado River Aqueduct where non-public sections are contiguous. The non-public lands account for about 10 percent of the entire roadless area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area contains portions of two major mountain ranges with a "transition area" between them. The Coxcomb Mountains rise sharply from the surrounding desert floor on the east end, with their jagged, granitic outline. The Pinto Mountains, on the west edge, have a more rounded form, although many of the slopes are steep. The Coxcomb Mountains grade westward into an area where small, granitic "boulder piles" abound, while the Pinto Mountains grade eastward into a valley with a small dry lake in the Clark's Pass area. Large alluvial fans slope away from the mountains. These fans are especially well-developed on the east side of the Coxcomb Mountains. Vegetation throughout the area is relatively sparse. Creosote and mixed shrubs dominate the bajadas and lower mountain slopes, becoming more sparse on the slopes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Boundaries have been adjusted to account for roads and to exclude from further wilderness study those heavily disturbed areas where the natural character of the land has been seriously degraded. The area west of the Iron Age Mine and road has been excluded due to the effects of past intensive mining in that region. Dale Mining District is riddled with shafts, tunnels, slag piles, and road cuts, as well as the remains of old structures and equipment. The Iron Age Mine contains several huge pits and covers a large area. There are very few areas within the mining district that could be considered natural. A high capacity powerline transects the southern portion of the Coxcomb Mountains. The maintenance road does not continue over the mountains. A few ways penetrate the area but are substantially unnoticeable.

The boundaries of the potential Wilderness Study Area are common with the roadless area boundaries along Twentynine Palms Highway from the eastern boundary through Clark's Pass. It diverges and follows contours southwest to the northwest corner of Section 7 (T 2S, R 13E). The boundary is common with the Joshua Tree National Monument to the Colorado River Aqueduct following the diking to the powerline crossing. The boundary follows the base of the mountain around the southern Coxcombs and along the eastern boundary excluding the flood dikes along the aqueduct. A way off of Highway 66, east of Clark's Pass penetrates the area, from north to south. Several other ways exist in the northeast corner of the area. One of these is very primitive and another leads to an old abandoned mine. Another way bisects the extreme northeast corner. The above ways have little effect upon the naturalness of this large area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Throughout those portions of the area having wilderness characteristics, terrain variety and the relative absence of man's works create an environment containing outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Particularly in the Coxcomb Mountains and in the boulder-pile area, steep rock canyon walls and the complex pattern of the low, granitic mounds isolate the individual from others and from the outside world and provide a sense of remoteness from civilization and immersion into pristine natural conditions.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments generally agreed with the findings. Some indicated the presence of roads and mines which were excluded where detected. Also several comments stated that the southern extreme of the Coxcomb Mountains met wilderness criteria and should be included in the inventory.

AREA 328A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located north of Desert Center, this area is bordered on the northwest by a major utility line right-of-way; on the northeast, by the Colorado River Aqueduct maintenance-access road; on the east and southeast, by Highway 177; on the southwest by a well-maintained road to the Dale Mining District.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 20 percent of the area is non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains the southern end of the Coxcomb Mountains. Elevations range from a low of about 600 feet on the bajadas to about 3000 feet on the top of the mountains. Vegetation, consisting mostly of creosote and desert shrubs, is restricted primarily to the bajadas.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Portions affected by man have been excluded from those areas containing wilderness values. The excluded portions include the flood control dikes, in the northeast and northwest corners and the bajada, below the 1000 foot contour line, for off-road vehicle tracks, ways, and a dumpsite, in the southern end.

The central core of the area, which contains the Coxcomb Mountains, has been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The Coxcomb Tunnel for the Colorado River Aqueduct bisects the northern portion but since it is below ground, has no impact upon the naturalness of the surface area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The rugged terrain of the Coxcomb Mountains and the naturalness of this portion provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

An overwhelming majority of comments addressed the southern portion of the Coxcombs, stating that this portion met wilderness criteria. A few comments spoke to specific intrusions. After field checks, the applicable intrusion portions were excluded from the area meeting wilderness criteria.

AREA 329

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular area is bounded to the south by Highway 62; to the northeast by a railroad line and graded road; and, to the west, by a utility line right-of-way and a paved road leading to the Iron Mountain Pumping Station.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area consists almost entirely of public land. The non-public land is associated with the Colorado River Aqueduct and accounts for approximately 8 percent of the entire area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is flat, with the white, alkaline surface of Danby Dry Lake Bed dominating much of the scenery. Vegetation is almost nonexistent on the lakebed and sparsely distributed elsewhere. It consists mostly of creosote and mixed shrubs. In some years, during the spring, white Dune Primrose may be seen blanketing the area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area contains numerous vehicle tracks, especially on the Dry Lake. However, these tracks do not reduce the natural quality of the entire area. No other encroaching man-made features were noted in the area, so it is considered to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the flat terrain, and the lack of substantial vegetative cover, there is little opportunity for visitors to be screened from one another. Opportunities for solitude are limited, and opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are generally lacking.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The comment received concerned solitude, but was not verified by further field examination.

AREA 330

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This narrow, elongated area is bordered by a wood pole line access road to the north and by Interstate 10 to the south.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is primarily public land, with non-public blocks located at both ends and comprising approximately 30 percent of the total acreage.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This relatively flat, linear area has little topographic relief and ranges from sparsely vegetated creosote to nearly nonexistent vegetation on Ford Dry Lake.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has been disturbed by man. Fence enclosures are located throughout the area, along with past evidence of development and two wells.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

With an average width of one to two miles, the confining nature of the area severely restricts opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments agreed with the findings.

AREA 331

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular-shaped area is bordered on the northeast by a maintained road; on the south, by Interstate 10; and, on the northwest, by Highway 177.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 50 percent public lands, with non-public holdings in a block in the northern one-half.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is relatively flat and includes creosote and some ironwood vegetation. Much of the western portion is in private land ownership.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man's work is substantially noticeable within this area, especially on the large portion of privately-owned lands which includes buildings, roads, and an airport.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited due to the confining nature of the area and inability of topographic features to screen visitors from one another.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

All comments received agreed with the findings.

AREA 332

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the northwest by a transmission line corridor and access road; to the northeast and southwest, by maintained roads; and, to the northeast, by Highway 177.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately six sections of non-public land which are scattered throughout and account for approximately 20 percent of the land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is a relatively flat, sparsely vegetated alluvial wash. Topographic features are notably absent, and vegetation is primarily creosote.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The natural appearance of the land appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. Man's works are substantially unnoticeable, with the exception of primitive ways which do not alter the natural appearance of the land.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the relatively small size, uniformity and sparseness of vegetation, and lack of topographic relief, natural screening of visitors from one another is restricted; thus, both outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are lacking.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received agreed with the findings.

AREA 332A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This small triangular-shaped area is bordered on the southeast by Highway 177; on the west, by the Kaiser Eagle Mountain Mine Road; and, on the northeast, by a maintained road connecting the Desert Center-Rice Road and the Kaiser Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately six sections of non-public land which are uniformly distributed throughout the site and account for approximately 40 percent of the land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is a relatively flat bajada with little topographic relief and some scattered Ironwood Trees and creosote. Some private land ownership is included.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Permanent improvements, human habitation, vehicle ways, and some development reduce the natural appearance.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely restricted due to the relatively small size of this roadless area as well as the absence of terrain variety to screen visitors from one another.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The comments received were opposed to wilderness designation for this area.

AREA 333

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular-shaped area is bounded on the west by an industrial railroad and maintained dirt road; to the east by a paved road providing access to the Eagle Mountain Mine; and, to the south by Interstate 10.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately two scattered sections of non-public land, which account for approximately 10 percent of the land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is a flat, broad bajada of the Eagle Mountains, with very little topographic relief. The area is sparsely vegetated, primarily with Creosote Bush Scrub. The narrow, elongated southwest portion contains extensive non-public lands as does the southeastern corner, which includes a portion of the community of Desert Center.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The Eagle Mountain dump, located 4.2 miles north of I-10 along R2, and the northern one-third of the area is heavily impacted by man. Except for these portions, and those in non-public land ownership, the area consists of undeveloped public land, without permanent improvements or human habitation.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Because of the relatively small size, flat terrain, and sparse vegetation, the ability to screen visitors from one another is greatly restricted. Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are lacking.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

One comment indicated that the lower two-thirds of the parcel should be given wilderness designation. The remainder expressed viewpoints that the area be deleted from further wilderness consideration.

AREA 334

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern border is formed by a maintained dirt road which joins Joshua Tree National Monument to Kaiser mining operations on the eastern border. The western boundary of this area is contiguous with a designated wilderness area in Joshua Tree National Monument. The eastern boundary includes maintained dirt roads, a portion of an industrial railroad, and a transmission line corridor right-of-way and access road. The southern boundary includes Interstate 10 and portions of the Hayfield Pumping Station road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This site includes approximately 12 sections of non-public land, scattered throughout the area and accounting for approximately 10 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The extremely diverse Eagle Mountains cover the majority of this area. Large, exfoliated boulders of quartz monzonite make up the southern limits of these mountains. These "jumbles" of rocks contrast highly with the dark, jagged rocks found more in the interior of this site. Large, interior washes and valleys, such as Big Wash, add to the complexity of the area. In some portions of the washes, vegetation is extremely thick and includes varieties of yucca, cactus, smoketrees and various annuals.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The vast majority of this area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work being substantially unnoticeable. Within the interior, and in the Big Wash area, only a few past mining activities are visible and most do not detract from the primeval character and influence of the land. The patented Rainbow End Mine and a patent mining claim located in Section 4 (T. 4 S., R. 14 E.) has been excluded. A large portion of the area in the northeast section was excluded from further wilderness consideration due to the extensive open-pit mine operation associated with the Eagle Mountain Iron Ore Mine. The boundary of the potential Wilderness Study Area was adjusted accordingly. The extreme southern portion was also removed from consideration due to extensive private land ownership, flood control dikes, and the permanent improvements and human habitation associated with the Hayfield Pumping Station.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude are outstanding within this roadless area due to the extreme ruggedness and diversity of the topography. Small canyons and boulder piles tend to create an intimate feeling of solitude, while some of the enclosed interior valleys and washes, combined with the ability of the vegetation to screen visitors from one another, allow a feeling of wide-open spaciousness. Associated with these varying types of solitude, the diversity of terrain and relationship to Joshua Tree National Monument wilderness, offers outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of public comments support further consideration of this area as an extension of Joshua Tree National Monument. Several comments supported the findings regarding roads and mining activity. Other comments opposed to inclusion were too general in nature to field validate.

AREA 334A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern and western boundaries of this roadless area are contiguous with the Joshua Tree National Monument. The eastern boundary is a dirt maintained road. The southern boundary consists of a mining road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 30 percent of the area is in non-public land forming a slender irregular shape near the middle. The western third is completely in public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is characterized by boulders and rugged mountains dissected by numerous small canyons. A small portion of the relatively flat to rolling Pinto Basin is within the western portion and contains scattered creosote.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The western one-third of the area is affected primarily by the forces of nature where the imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable. In contrast, the eastern two-thirds is heavily impacted by extensive open pit mining scars. Numerous tunnels, shafts, and tailings lace this area, thus altering the natural appearance of the landscape. Roads to "satellite" mining and exploration areas radiate north and westward from the Eagle Mountain Mine, degrading the natural character of the mountains up to the ridgelines where the border of Joshua Tree National Monument is located. The eastern boundary of the resulting potential study area has been adjusted westward to the first ridgeline of the mountains, near the Cactus Mine.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The ruggedness and diversity of terrain, which tends to screen visitors from one another, as well as adjacency to Joshua Tree National Monument wilderness, all tend to create outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments were received supporting the inclusion of the west portion of the area for further wilderness study. The comments also urged the addition of portions of the mountains between Joshua Tree National Monument and the Eagle Mountain Mine. However, mining activities affect the natural character up to the ridgeline, which coincides with the Monument border. Mining interests expressed concern that future expansion of current mining operations would be restricted by wilderness study designation. This concern is not an inventory factor.

AREA 335

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the north by State Highway 62; to the east, by the graded Gold Crown Road; and, to the south and west, by Joshua Tree National Monument and a short segment of a paved road leading into the Monument from Twentynine Palms.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Public lands predominate. Non-public sections occur in a widely scattered pattern and account for approximately 10 percent of the total area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Most of the area is dominated by steep, but generally rounded, hills, vegetated with creosote and mixed desert shrubs. Vegetation becomes more diverse in the washes, consisting of smoke tree and other typical wash-type plants. Stands of Mojave yucca exist in many of the interior valleys. An extensive bajada skirts the northern edge of the mountains, sloping northward to non-public lands and homesteads and eventually to State Highway 62.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Certain portions of the area have been excluded from further wilderness consideration due to man's impacts which affect the natural condition and limit opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Such exclusions include the Music Valley mining area to the west; the Humbug Mountain mining area to the east; the Marbolite Mine area; a well graded road leading up to antennae installations on the north tip of Twentynine Palms Mountain; non-public property; and, Small Tract Act homesteads to the north. The Music Valley area contains some stone walls, remnants of old stone cabins, tunnels, and some old stone-work roads. The Humbug Mountain and Marbolite mining areas have sustained intensive mining activity in the past. The resulting road cuts, tunnels, slag piles, and structures are readily visible from most locations within the excluded area. After exclusions, the remainder of the area generally retains its primeval character. Most boundaries follow the top of ridges, so the external features have little influence on the natural character of the interior.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

In the non-excluded portions, opportunities for solitude are outstanding due to the variety of topography found in the mountains and the numerous enclosed areas. In addition, the adjacent Joshua Tree National Monument Wilderness Area expands opportunities for solitude, as well as providing outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most of the comments received favored the area's inclusion for further study based on wilderness value criteria and location adjacent to Joshua Tree National Monument Wilderness. Many urged expansion of the boundaries through rehabilitation of the mining scars, although rehabilitation would require mechanical means. A few comments dealt with roads and mines which have been excluded where appropriate.

AREA 336

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded by Joshua Tree National Monument on the east and the north; by the Berdoo Canyon Road to the northwest; and, on the south, by Fargo Canyon Road and the Colorado River Aqueduct maintenance road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands because of the checkerboard pattern nor is the area of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were received on this area. Most indicated a desire to include the parcel in wilderness study as a buffer for Joshua Tree National Monument. There were also quite a number of comments asking that the area be deleted from any wilderness designation due to the effects of off-road vehicle use.

AREA 336A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area borders Joshua Tree National Monument to the north; a paved road to the west; the Berdoo Canyon Road to the south.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands nor is the area of sufficient size as to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments indicated that the western part of the roadless area should be studied further. Other comments stressed geothermal development potential.

AREA 337

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by Joshua Tree National Monument and the Colorado River Aqueduct; on the west, by the Aqueduct maintenance road; on the south, by the Dillon Road; and, on the east, by a maintained road connecting Dillon Road with Fall Hill.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands, nor is the area of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition. Furthermore, private housing developments have adversely affected the primeval character and influence of the landscape.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received were in agreement with the findings that the area should be dropped from further wildnerness study.

AREA 338

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This roadless area is bounded on the north by Joshua Tree National Monument and the Colorado River Aqueduct; on the west, by the Long Canyon Road; on the south, by the Dillion Road; and, on the east, by the Aqueduct Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands, nor is the area of sufficient size so that its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition would be practical. Little or no public lands are adjacent to the National Monument.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received were in agreement with the findings.

AREA 339A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located adjacent to Highway 62, east of Joshua Tree National Monument. The site is bordered on the north and west by Highway 62; on the south, by the community of Desert Hot Springs; and, on the east, by a powerline road.

II. LAND STATUS

The area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land, nor is it of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpared condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received were split in opinion as to whether or not the area should recieve wilderness study area designation.

AREA 339B

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The site, located adjacent to the western edge of Joshua Tree National Monument, is bordered on the north and west by a powerline right-of-way and associated road, and, on the south, by the community of Desert Hot Springs.

II. LAND STATUS

The area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land because of the checkerboard land pattern, nor is it of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received were equally divided in opinion as to exclusion or inclusion of the area for wilderness designation. None denied the existence of the checkerboard land ownership pattern which led to eliminating the roadless area from further wilderness consideration.

AREA 340

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located southeast of Palm Springs, the site is bordered by Highway 111 on the north; on the east, by Highway 74; and, on the southwest, by the San Bernardino National Forest.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The site has a checkerboard land ownership pattern and, therefore, does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land. In addition the checkerboard tracts are not of sufficient size to make practicable their preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were reviewed advocating further wilderness consideration for this large area. The issue continues to be that no parcel of BLM land is over 640 acres because of the checkerboard land pattern.

AREA 341

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Situated in the Santa Rosa Mountains southwest of Indio, the area is bordered on the east by private land and the roads and streets surrounding Indio. San Bernardino National Forest, Coyote Canyon Road, and Anza Borrego State Park define the boundaries to the west and south. Highways 111 and 74 mark the northern extreme.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

For the most part, the site is checkerboarded; approximately 50 percent public land and 50 percent non-public land. A fairly large tract of about 30 sections of contiguous public land occupies the mountain top in the southeast corner of the area. This area has been retained for further wilderness study.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists primarily of the Santa Rosa Mountains and foothills. These are rugged, boulder mountains displaying highly eroded canyons and washes, valleys, steep cliffs and sheer surfaces. It is surrounded by a relatively short alluvial fan that slopes eastward toward the Salton Sea and contains part of the shoreline of ancient Lake Cahuilla. Vegetation within the boundaries is diverse and ranges through the spectrum from desert (agave, ocotillo, creosote) to mountain (pinyon, juniper). Numerous life zones are included, and each reflects the unique plant life typical of the zone. The large public land tract consists mostly of the main Santa Rosa Mountain mass.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The large area of contiguous public land has generally retained its primeval character and influence, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The rugged terrain has limited access into the area, thereby protecting the site and allowing it to maintain its natural character. The public lands in the checkerboard pattern of ownership are included in the Wilderness Study Area. After consultation with California Department of Fish and Game, it was determined that such designation would be compatible with management of their lands.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The rugged mountain terrain, in addition to the dense and diverse vegetation patterns, combine to produce numerous areas of isolation. The screening effect of these natural barriers insures outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area is diverse enough to provide a wide variety of primitive-type activities.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments were overwhelming in saying this area is one of the most pristine and potentially spectacular wilderness areas in the desert. These comments will need to be evaluated in the study phase as to whether an enlarged area should be considered.

AREA 341A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located in the Santa Rosa Mountains the site is surrounded by Anza Borrego Desert State Park on its east, west and south sides. Its northern border is defined by Coyote Canyon Road which provides access into the State Park and supports ranching activities along its border.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land nor is it of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

All public comments received dealt with geothermal potential, which is not an inventory consideration.

AREA 342

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the south by Interstate 10; on the west, by the Dillon Road; on the north, by the Colorado River Aqueduct road; and, on the east, by the Cottonwood Springs Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Because of the checkerboard land pattern this area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition. Furthermore, man-made improvements on privately-owned lands have adversely affected the primeval character and influence of the landscape.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received were in agreement with the findings that the area should be dropped from further wilderness study.

AREA 343

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by Interstate 10, on the east and southeast by the paved Box Canyon Road; and, on the south-southwest, by the Coachella Canal and a portion of a Riverside County maintained road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately 24 sections of non-public land scattered throughout, mostly in a checkerboard pattern and accounting for 35 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The majority of this roadless area contains the extremely colorful, deeply eroded, and sparsely-vegetated Mecca Hills. Small, narrow, steep-walled canyons wind throughout this area creating a natural maze within this badlands labyrinth. Sandy washes dissect the area and contain stands of ironwood, smoke trees, and palo verde, while scattered stands of ocotillo grow on the hilly slopes. Some portions of the Mecca Hills, known also as the Mud Hills, show evidence of the presence of the San Andreas Fault which has uplifted adding to the erosion and breaking off huge rock slabs. The northern and western portions of this roadless area are more gently sloping and include large desert washes such as Thermal Canyon. This portion is either in private land ownership or checkerboard ownership which creates areas of noncontiguous public lands.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Within the solidly blocked portion of the Mecca Hills man's work is substantially unnoticeable and is an area where the earth and its community of life are undisturbed by man. Presently, the area is used by off-road vehicles, but much of the use occurs in the washes where visible alteration of the primeval character and influence of the land is not readily apparent. Some primitive ways do exist on the hills and erosion has occurred on the steep slopes. Although visible, the intimacy and extent of the canyon systems within the Meccas greatly reduces the imprint of man's work. The only portion within the Mecca Hills which has been excluded as not containing wilderness values is the Riverside County maintained road and campground in Painted Canyon. There is an Airway Beacon site and service road located in this area south of Cactus City.

The potential Wilderness Study Area boundary is common with the roadless area boundary on the east, west and south sides. The northwestern boundary follows a wash which cuts diagonally across the public/private boundary to near the beacon tower, then generally follows the contour at about the 1600 foot level back to Box Springs Road.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Unlimited outstanding opportunities for solitude exist in the Mecca Hills due to the intricate passageways and complex canyon system which wind into the interior and tend to create a psychologically large area which effectively screens users from one another. Combined with this intimate type of solitude, outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation experience is easily obtained. Diverse landforms and colorful and highly eroded rugged terrain all add to primitive and unconfined movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments against inclusion cited the history of off-road vehicle use. Field examination confirmed that evidence of this use was, for the most part, confined to sandy canyon bottoms and would pass with time; therefore, the impact was not long-term and would not impair the suitability of the area for consideration as wilderness. Other public comments addressed study phase considerations.

AREA 344

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This roadless area parallels the paved Box Canyon Road to the west and northwest; Interstate 10 to the north; the Salt Creek Road and Kaiser Industrial Railroad to the east and southeast; and, to the south, the Bradshaw Stage Road and access road along the Coachella Canal and a wood pole utility line road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Sections of non-public land forming a scattered checkerboard pattern account for approximately 35 percent of the area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes both the Orocopia Mountains and the southeastern portion of the Mecca Hills. The Mecca Hills include the often visited Sheep Hole Oasis, Hidden Springs, and the grotto. Rugged, colorful canyon walls are highly varied and in some situations exhibit fresh fault scarps. The water found at Hidden Springs is a source for wildlife such as coyote, rabbits, and Bighorn Sheep. In the desert washes grow ironwood, palo verde, smoke tree, and the palm enclaves at Sheep Hole Oasis and Hidden Springs. The Orocopia Mountains are an extremely diverse and varied mountain landform. The northern portion is characterized by open valleys, dissected ridges, and an isolated mountain. The southern portion consists of highly colorful and dramatic eroded canyons and ridges. Vegetation is sparse but varied. In the open valleys are found creosote along with ironwood in the washes. Ocotillo is found in the hilly slopes as well as a small cluster of yucca near the Red Canyon jeep trail. Views of the Salton Sea are notable throughout the southern portion of this roadless area. The northeastern portion of this area contains a checkerboard pattern of noncontiguous public lands as does a portion of the interior of the Orocopia Mountains.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Much of this area is within a BLM area closed to motorized vehicles and is an area which retains its primeval character and influence with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. Some past mining activities have occurred in the Orocopias but are of insignificant importance and have done little to nothing to alter the natural condition of the land. Some primitive ways do penetrate portions of this roadless area, but the majority are in washes or in areas where the immensity and ruggedness of the terrain remain the dominant feature. In the northeast corner the natural character has been adversely affected by bulldozing scarps and ORV scars. The northern boundary also excludes the flood control dike system south of Interstate 10, and flood control dikes north of the Coachella Canal along the southern boundary. All of the checkerboard land ownership pattern, in the area, has been excluded from the inventory as it does not contain contiguous public land.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The rugged character of the terrain and the diversity of land forms insure outstanding opportunities for solitude in both areas. Rocky outcrops and numerous canyons add to the ability of the landscape to screen visitors and add to the sense of isolation. Opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are outstanding due to diversity and the ability of the site to ensure unrestricted movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received pointed out popularity of the area by recreational vehicle users, the overall high natural value of much of the area and questioned the BLM about deleting the extreme eastern end of the roadless area.

AREA 345

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular-shaped area is bounded on the north by the Coachella Canal and access road; on the southeast, by the Kaiser Eagle Mountain Industrial Railroad; and, on the southwest, by Highway 111.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5,000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition. Furthermore, man-made improvements on the private land ownership have adversely affected the primeval character.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received agreed with the findings.

AREA 346

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the northwest by the Kaiser Eagle Mountain Industrial Railroad; on the southwest, by Highway 111; on the east, by the Frink Road; and, on the northeast, by the Coachella Canal and access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition. Furthermore, the natural condition of the land has been severely altered by man's work, which includes utility pole lines and man-made improvements.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received agreed with the findings.

AREA 347

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded on the northwest by the Bradshaw Trail Road, and the Kaiser Eagle Mountain Industrial Railroad; on the east, by a gas pipeline road; and, on the south, by the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands because of the checkerboard public/non-public land ownership pattern.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is relatively flat with little topographic relief. Some ironwood and creosote grow in this area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area generally appears to be affected primarily by the force of nature, although some structures and equipment at the Summit reduce the naturalness of the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited due to the confining nature of this area and the inability of topographic features to screen visitors from one another.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments were received: most comments favor designating all or parts of this area as wilderness; others, opposed to a wilderness classification.

AREA 348

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This roadless area is bordered on the north by Interstate 10 and the Chuckwalla Valley Road; on the west, by a gas pipeline right-of-way; on the south, by a combination of the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range, a mining road and the Bradshaw Stage Road; and, on the east, by the Graham Pass Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately 35 sections of non-public land scattered throughout the site and accounting for approximately 10 percent of the land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This large area incorporates significant portions of two primary landscape types characteristic of this region's desert areas; a mountain range of colorful, rugged rocky ridges, boulders, and hills, and a broad expansive bajada dissected by ironwood washes. Numerous canyons intricately weave into the interiors of this roadless area. The southern portion, known as the Chuckwalla Bench, is the transition zone between the Colorado and Mojave Deserts, thus contains a wide variety of vegetation which includes clusters of ocotillos, cholla cactus gardens, yucca, thick stands of creosote, barrel cactus, and nolinas. The area also contains large populations of desert tortoise, Bighorn sheep, raptors, and abundant evidence of ancient man and Native American usage. Portions of this area were classified as primitive areas in 1972 by the Secretary of the Interior under the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation Classification System.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The majority of this roadless area is affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The area, with a few exceptions, retains its primeval character and influence. Those exceptions have been excluded from that portion of the roadless area which contains wilderness values. An area approximately one and one-half miles wide along the mountain valley interface along the northern border has been excluded for the flood control dikes, many ways, off-road vehicle scars, and the patented Granite Mine. A patented mining claim located in Section 15 (T. 6 S., R. 15 E.) has also been excluded. The mining road one mile south of the Model mine, in the southwest corner, and the area south of it has been excluded for mining roads, ways, and scars. The Red Cloud Canyon area and road, off the western boundary, has been excluded for patented mining claims, buildings, ways and mining scars. In addition, the road and the radio tower facility off of, and to the northeast of, the Red Cloud Mine Road has been excluded. The Corn Springs/Aztec Wells Road has been excluded, as has the community of Aztec Wells, the mining area south of the road and north of Pilot Mountain, Corn Springs Campground, patented mining claims, and the BLM storage building northeast of Corn Springs. The Dupont Road to and including the Aztec Mines area has been excluded for extensive mining scars. A mining road heading west off the Dupont Road, to Section 12 (T. 7 S., R. 16 E.), has been excluded. Also a mining road, south and west of the Aztec Mines, to Section 34 (T. 7 S., R. 16 E.), has been excluded. The area along the eastern border has been deleted for Patton's tank track scars. Lastly, the Chuckwalla Springs Road and the associated mining area at Chuckwalla Spring have been excluded for extensive mining roads, ways and scars. There are several jeep trails penetrating the area from the southern border but they have an insignificant affect upon the naturalness of this large area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This large, diverse mountain/bajada roadless area contains both outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type or recreation. Wide open spaces and large interior valleys give a feeling of spaciousness while the rugged, narrow canyons and jumbles of rocky spires and ridges provide an intimate sense of solitude. Combined with these diverse types of solitude, varied topography and terrain, as well as complex ecological types and an abundance of animals and historical features, add to primitive recreational experiences. Several water sources are found throughout this area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of comments addressing inventory criteria mentioned the effects of man. Other comments stated that the present boundaries were good. The area was reevaluated, and changes made where appropriate. Other comments spoke to study phase issues.

AREA 349

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular-shaped area is bordered by Interstate 10 and the Chuckwalla Valley Road which parallels a power transmission line right-of-way.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 30 percent of this area is non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This relatively flat area is a portion of the creosote vegetative Chuckwalla Valley. Some scattered private land is situated within this area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Development of the private land parcels make this area one that has been disturbed by man, and man's work is substantially noticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited due to the confining nature of private land ownership as well as the conformity and lack of topographic relief which restricts the ability to screen visitors from one another.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments agreed with the findings.

AREA 350

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary parallels Interstate 10 and a portion of the Chuckwalla Valley Road; the western boundary borders the Graham Pass Road; to the south, the Bradshaw Stage Road and a utility line right-of-way, and, to the east, the Wiley Wells Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately 20 sections of non-public land scattered throughout the site and accounting for approximately 7 percent of the land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes the dark, elongated Little Chuckwalla Mountains and large, associated bajada which is sparsely vegetated with creosote and ocotillo. Some ironwood is found in the desert washes. Large, flat areas of desert pavement are notable throughout the northern portion of this roadless area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The vast majority of this area retains its primeval character and influence and generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with man's work substantially unnoticeable. The west and north portion of this roadless area have been excluded from that part of the area which contains wilderness values. Man's work is substantially noticeable in this portion and includes flood control dikes along the south side of Interstate 10 as well as past military activity attributed to the Patton Desert Strike which has left numerous tank and vehicle tracks upon the desert pavement and bajada. The developed Wiley Wells campground has also been excluded from consideration in the extreme southeast corner of the area. An area along the southern boundary has been excluded for an extensive network of mining roads and scars. A jeep trail crosses the area in a north-south direction but has little affect upon the naturalness of the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The rough, rugged volcanic and metamorphic Little Chuckwalla Mountains, and large expansive bajada combine to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Small, narrow canyons and numerous washes enchance the ability of the area to screen visitors from one another. The diverse topography and lack of man-made improvements allow a freedom of unconfined movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments addressing inventory criteria were evenly divided between agreement with the area's inclusion and noting the many roads and trails missed in the draft inventory. After an additional field check, appropriate changes were made. A few comments dealt with study phase issues.

AREA 351

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary parallels a maintained access road. The western boundary is the Wiley Wells Road; the southern, the Bradshaw Stage Road; and, the eastern, several maintained mining and powerline access roads.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately 10 sections of non-public land scattered throughout the site and accounting for approximately 20 percent of the land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area consists of both rolling and rugged mountain terrain, as well as an open bajada and small sand dune system. Large stands of creosote vegetation cover the extensive bajadas, while the mountain slopes are sparsely vegetated. Ironwood grows in washes, notably in the northwestern portion of this roadless area.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man has impacted the area to the point that it no longer retains its natural character. The mountains have been encroached upon on all sides by mining operations, some still active, leaving conspicuous tailing dumps, mine structures, and tunnels with a profusion of roads and ways radiating from them. Most of the bajada surrounding the mountains is laced with tracks and trails in the desert pavement. The northern portion of the area contains numerous man-made features, including human habitation, communication cables, above and below ground, pipelines, and a Federal Aviation Administration communication site.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Although some isolated enclaves do provide some opportunities for solitude, the major portion of the area offers only limited opportunities due to the conspicuous presence of the many works of man. These encroaching man-made features would also have a confining effect on the visitor.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments were fairly evenly divided between those who supported the area's inclusion for further wilderness study and those who felt the natural values had been impaired. The area has been excluded from further wilderness study as a result of its impaired natural condition and limited opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

AREA 351A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the north by the Bradshaw Stage Road; on the east, by a transmission corridor right-of-way and access road; on the south, by the Opal Hill Mine Road; and, on the west, by the Wiley Wells Milpitas Wash Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 15 percent of the area is in non-public, randomly-placed lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The southern portion of the rolling and sparsely vegetated Mule Mountains make up the western portion of this area. The eastern portion includes a large pebble terrace and flats covered with desert pavement and savannah-like vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Much of this area is marred by man-made features which have altered the natural appearance of the landscape. In the southwestern portion, the Opal Hill Mine is highly visible and includes bulldozer scars, permanent habitations and structures, and roads. Some primitive, yet highly visible, ways cross much of this area, and man's work is substantially noticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the Opal Hill Mine, numerous ways, sparse vegetation and open topography, outstanding opportunites for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are restricted.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments generally agreed with the findings. Some interest was expressed in a further study of the northwest portion.

AREA 352

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by the Opal Hill Mine Road; on the west and south by the Coon Hollow - Milpitas Wash Road; and, on the east, by a transmission line right-of-way across the Palo Verde Mesa.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately 25 sections of non-public land checkerboarded in the southern and western portions and accounting for approximately 8 percent of the land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes rolling hills, and steep, colorful, jagged volcanic mountain peaks. Small, narrow canyons lead into enclosed basins and intimate valleys. Although vegetation is sparse, large stands of Ironwood are found in Milpitas Wash and a small palm oasis is located at Clapp Spring. Large, vast flat areas of desert pavement surround much of the Palo Verde Mountains.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The vast majority of this area is affected primarily by the forces of nature with man's work substantially unnoticeable. Rockhound activity is very much in evidence, but the ruggedness and dramatic rock spires far overwhelm the impact of man's alteration. Thus, the area retains its primeval character and influence. The northern portion of this area contains permanent improvements and human habitation in the form of the Opal Hill Mine and numerous primitive ways and inactive mining claims. This portion north of a jeep trail, has been excluded from wilderness consideration. The checkerboard portion at the southern end of the area has been excluded due to the non-contiguous land status, a road, and off-road vehicle impacts. The potential Wilderness Study Area boundary is common with the roadless area boundary on the east and west. The southern boundary is formed by private land. The permanent improvements and areas of human habitation, primitive ways and inactive mining claims have been excluded from the northern portion of the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Numerous small, winding canyons and enclosed valleys create an area able to accommodate primitive recreation uses, yet still offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of the public comments dealt with study phase considerations such as oil, gas and geothermal potential and rockhounding. Several comments substantiated the findings; others identified roads which were validated and included in the narrative and on the map.

AREA 352A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered by the Old Palo Verde Road on the west; on the south, by the Waiter's Camp Road; on the east, by Highway 78; and, on the north, by a maintained road that connects Highway 78 with the Old Palo Verde Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 50 percent of the area is non-public land in a checkerboard pattern.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains the eastern portion of the steep volcanic Palo Verde Mountains. These mountains have numerous narrow vertical canyons which lead into small interior valleys. There is little vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Oustanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely limited due to the private ownership pattern which tends to confine and hinder freedom of movement and the ability to disperse.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment supported the area for inclusion in the wilderness inventory.

AREA 353

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by a combination of the Bradshaw Stage Road and a power line support road; on the east, by the extension of the Milpitas Wash Road to Wiley Well; on the south, by maintained roads; and, on the west, by the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 45 percent of the area is non-public land with distribution in a checkerboard pattern. One portion, located in the northeast section of the roadless area, contains approximately 20 sections of contiguous public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Terrain within the area varies between flat sandy surfaces, rock outcrops, foothills and small mountains. The Little Mule Mountains, the Black Hills and portions of the foothills of the Palo Verde Mountains combine with the broad Milpitas Wash to provide a variety of topographical relief. Although generally sparse, vegetation in the areas of the washes becomes relatively dense. In addition to the creosote and desert shrubs, the washes support a large number of Smoke trees. Palo Verde, cat claw and mesquite can be found.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The greatest percentage of this large area has been excluded from further consideration because of land ownership status. The remaining small area in the northeast corner was excluded because present use has degraded the naturalness of the site. Off-road vehicle tracks can be seen throughout. Heavy use is evident in the washes and along the borders. Large areas of desert pavement are permanently scarred and denuded of vegetation. In addition, a road penetrates the site, leading to and past a guzzler which is quite visible. The natural condition has been degraded to the point where it no longer meets minimal wilderness criteria.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Vegetation and landform would support only a sense of solitude and opportunities for an unconfined type of recreation would be limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several public comments addressed the unique vegetative associations located in the Milpitas Wash. Other comments indicated strong rockhounding interests. As the narrative indicates, none of Area 353 is being considered for further wilderness study.

AREA 354

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the north by the Milpitas Wash Road; on the south and west, by a maintained road; and, on the east, by a utility pole line and access road and Highway 78.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 50 percent of the area is non-public lands. The remainder does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Only a few comments, and those were in favor of wilderness designation for the checkerboard sections.

AREA 355

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located beside the Colorado River, between Blythe and Yuma. Its western boundary is formed by Highways 78 and S-34; the southern border, by Indian Pass Road; the eastern boundary, by the edge of the California Desert Conservation Area; and, the short northern border, Walters Camp Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The northern portion of the area, roughly north of Quartz Peak, is checkerboarded with public and non-public land. In the southern area there are three sections of non-public land which account for approximately 5 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This relatively large area encompasses a large variety of terrain. A great deal of land is flat to low rolling hills, laced with washes of all widths and depths. Scattered rugged low mountains, canyons, and highly eroded surfaces occur throughout the site. Plant cover varies considerably with location and elevation. The entire spectrum, from sites entirely void of vegetation to areas with relatively dense coverage, is mixed throughout. Vegetation in the washes reaches deep into the site from the heavily vegetated Colorado River area. Creosote, mesquite, smoke trees, catclaw plus a variety of low desert shrubs and grasses abound in many areas.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The boundary of the potential Wilderness Study Area is common with the California Desert Conservation Area boundary on the east north to the checkerboard land pattern. From that point, it extends west following the bottom edge of the private land for approximately five miles and then southwest along a short mining road in the northern portion of Peter Kane Mountain; from here southeast along the Julian Wash Road to Section 6 (T. 13 S., R. 21 E.). The potential Wilderness Study Area excludes the mining activity in Julian Wash. The boundary crosses the Black Mountains east of the repeater site, excluding that site and associated roads and powerlines. It then skirts around the base of the Black Mountains to Indian Pass where it follows the jeep trail in Gavilan Wash back to the California Desert Conservation Area boundary. Also a small area has been excluded just northeast of Indian Pass, for mining scars.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

This relatively remote area offers a variety of topography and vegetative screening. Rapidly changing landforms, rugged surfaces with deep, twisting washes, valleys and canyons in addition to areas of heavy vegetation provide numerous outstanding opportunities for solitude. Diversity of the site provides numerous challenges to visitors.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments pointed out the extent of the imprint of man's work in the north and southwest portions and the naturalness of the core. Field checks validated these comments and made appropriate changes.

AREA 355A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The roadless area is located beside the Colorado River near Yuma, Arizona. The area is bordered on northwest by the Indian Pass Road; on the northeast, by the Picacho State Recreation Area; on the east, by Picacho Road; on the southeast, by the road from elevation 423, in Section 22 (T. 15 S. R. 22 E.), west and southwest to a utility line in Section 10 (T. 16 S., R. 21 E.); on the southwest, by the utility line road right-of-way; and, on the west by Highway S 34.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately 8 sections of non-public land scattered throughout and accounting for approximately 9 percent of the land area. A small area along the northern edge of the potential wilderness study area is in a Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The borders of the site encompass a wide variety of topography. In the southern section, the rugged, Cargo Muchacho Mountains dominate the scene. Volcanic rocks, deep canyons, twisting washes, mixed with more typical flat desert areas present an impressive picture. Moving north, the terrain changes into low rolling hills and then back into the jagged and coarse area around Picacho Peak, a local landmark. Plant cover varies considerably throughout the site. In the Cargo Muchacho Mountains and Picacho Peaks area, vegetation is sparse to nonexistent. Washes provide the primary green areas in the southern and central areas. Nearing the Colorado River, plant life increases dramatically; mesquite, catclaw, smoke trees, and a wide variety of low desert shrubs and grasses can be found.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The naturalness of the site has suffered considerably from past activities of man. The Cargo Muchacho Mountains are laced with roads and ways, mining scars, equipment and debris. The signs of man's activities extend far up the site to the base of the Picacho

Peak area. The northern portion of the area has been excluded due to a Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal. Private land holdings in the central portion are abundant. The remaining area, which is located between Gatuna Wash and Gavilan Wash and adjoins the Picacho State Recreation area is pristine. A small mining area near the northern portion of the site has been excluded.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Many outstanding opportunities for solitude exist within the remaining area. The rugged terrain provides numerous spaces where solitude can be attained. Topographic and vegetative screening combine to insure isolation. The variety of terrain provides outstanding opportunities for primitive and unrestricted types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments addressing inventory considerations were evenly divided on the status of natural condition. A few other comments were received concerning study phase considerations.

AREA 356

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located in the southeastern corner of California north of Yuma, Arizona. Roughly rectangular in shape, the site is bordered on the west by a graded road and on the east by a combination of the California Desert Conservation Area border and a graded road and, in the southeast corner, by a ridgeline. The northern border is formed by the Picacho State Recreation area and the southern edge is defined by a line just north of the All-American Canal.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately four sections of non-public lands are scattered through the area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This site includes a wide variety of terrain. Within its 260 square miles, flat meadow-like areas, low rolling hills, table-top mountains, rough and jagged peaks jutting up from the desert floor, deep canyons, and washes are all an integral part of the area. The surrounding river, canals, and lakes provide support for an abundance of vegetation not normally found in the desert. Tall, dense smoke trees, palo verde and mesquite grow near the water and in the washes thinning out rapidly near the center of the area where the more typical ocotillo creosote and cholla dominate the flat lands. Vegetation in the washes is lush and forms long lines of green. When contrasted against the rock and sand surfaces, this tends to visually divide the site.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Within the area, the majority of the land has retained its primeval character and influence. Mining activity, claims, and mining roads have been excluded from the western, southern and eastern borders.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The complex landforms, which change rapidly between areas, provide the natural barriers necessary to separate the entire area into isolated spaces. Vegetation reinforces the topography to insure the screening necessary to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area is large enough and diverse enough to provide outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were received on this area. Most that were relevant to the inventory pointed out areas where ORV, rockhounding and mining took place. Some additional roads were also identified. A field evaluation has led to some additional changes that excluded additional areas not meeting wilderness criteria.

AREA 357

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular-shaped area is bordered on the northeast by a maintained dirt road; on the south, by the All-American Canal and access road; and, on the west, by a maintained dirt road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Less than 10 percent of the area is non-public land, located randomly.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This relatively flat and semi-rolling roadless area contains extensive areas of desert pavement and washes with smoke tree and palo verde.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man is not a visitor to this area as man's work is substantially noticeable. The southwest portion includes an electrical power station while numerous ways, remains of structures, and active collection sites of fill dirt are found throughout.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited due to the confining effects of numerous ways and alteration of the natural landscape.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nearly all of the public comments addressed study phase considerations. Comments addressing inventory criteria acknowledged bulldozing activity, but did not feel the impacts were significant.

AREA 358

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular shaped area is bounded by the Southern Pacific Railroad on the south; a portion of Highway 78 and a maintained road on the west; and, Highway 534 on the east.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains about 8 sections of non-public lands in random spacing.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This relatively flat area has little topographic relief and is sparsely vegetated with creosote and is dissected by numerous desert washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Some mining activity with large tailing dumps and permanent structures, as well as ranching activity, occur within the interior and along the periphery of this area. The area contains permanent improvements or habitation and man is not a visitor.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited due to the confining nature of mining and ranching activities which restrict freedom of movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments indicated potential for geothermal development. Further comment indicated that natural values have not been lost by man's activities.

AREA 359

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the northwest by Highway 78; on the south, by railroad tracks; and, on the northeast, by a maintained road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains one or two sections of non-public lands in random placement.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This relatively flat bajada is sparsely vegetated with creosote and is occasionally dissected by desert washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Situated east of Glamis, this area is heavily intruded by man's work and the landscape does not retain its primeval character and influence. Mining operations with tiling dumps and open-pit mines are found throughout the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely restricted due to the multitude of man's actions, which confine and limit freedom of movement and the ability to find solitude.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments addressing wilderness inventory considerations concurred with the findings. Several comments addressed the geothermal potential, which is a study phase factor.

AREA 360

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This elongated, triangular-shaped roadless area is bounded on the northeast by a combination of the Southern Pacific Railroad and the Niland Glamis Road; to the south, by Highway 78; and, to the west, by a combination of the new, bulldozed route of the Coachella Canal and the old Coachella Canal and access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately nine sections of non-public land in a checkerboard pattern, accounting for approximately 35 percent of the land. This entire area is also a Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is characterized by large dunes as well as small, mesquite-covered dune masses. The southern half is a National Natural Landmark and an area which BLM closed to off-road vehicle activity in order to protect critical habitats for plant species endemic to the Imperial Sand Dunes which have been proposed for listing as threatened and endangered.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The portion of the area which retains its primeval character and influence, and generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, is that part presently recognized as a National Natural Landmark and is closed to motorized vehicle usage. In addition, this area contains only two sections of private land. The area to the north of this landmark boundary has been excluded from Wilderness consideration because of man's disturbances. It includes Mammoth Wash, which is heavily used by off-road vehicles, resulting in reduced natural vegetative cover. The area around Glamis has also been excluded due to the buildings, roads, and off-road vehicle scars.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The complexity of the dune system, as well as natural screening of visitors from one another by terrain and thick stands of mesquite vegetation provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Due to the unique natural qualities and the natural condition of the southern portion, freedom of movement is unimpeded.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A majority of the comments speaking to the inventory factors agreed with the present status of the area's boundaries or felt they should be expanded. Other comments said the area had roads that hadn't been included or that the works of man were evident. The area has been re-evaluated and changes have been made where appropriate. Many of the comments received dealt entirely with study phase factors.

AREA 361

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the north by a maintained road; on the east, by the Coachella Canal and access road; on the south, by Highway 78; and, on the west, by the East Highline Canal and access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Only one section is non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is relatively flat and heavily vegetated with creosote, and is a portion of East Mesa. This sandy area is part of the Algodones Dune system that extends east into roadless Areas 360 and 362.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The central portion of this area is a U.S. Naval Reservation bombing area; otherwise, the majority of the area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The Schoneman Road in the western portion leads to several gravel pits which reduce the natural condition. The entire roadless area is within a Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMTIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are restrictive due to the large military inholding, which prevents freedom of travel.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received recommended the area be included for further study, primarily because it is an integral part of the larger Algodones Dunes area. Those agreeing with deletion of the area did so because of geothermal potential in the area.

AREA 362

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary of this area parallels Highway 78; the western boundary, a combination of the Coachella Canal and access road and the new, bulldozed, Coachella

Canal Route; the southern, a combination of the All-American Canal and Interstate 8; and, the eastern, a railroad.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately seven sections of non-public land scattered throughout and accounting for approximately 3 percent of the area. The area is a Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area consists primarily of the Algodones Dune System which is one of the largest dune masses in the United States. The northern portion of this roadless area includes steep sandy slopes, while the central portion includes more gently rolling dune masses with thickets of mesquite and palo verde. The steeper western flanks drop rapidly to Creosote Bush Scrub flats. Several plant species found in this area have been proposed for Federal listing as "endangered." In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed "endangered" listing for the Andrews scarab beetle and the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The large central portion of the Algodones Dune system is affected primarily by the forces of nature and is an area where the earth and its community of life are undisturbed by man. The northern portion includes the Gecko Campground and Osborne County Park near Competition Hill. Off-road vehicle activity has severely reduced much of the natural vegetative cover and has compacted the northern sand mass. Similarly, use in the southern portion of the Algodones Dunes by off-road vehicles has reduced natural vegetation. Due to the alteration of the natural landscape by off-road vehicle activity which has resulted in the imprint of man's work being substantially noticeable, these areas, as well as those along the eastern and western borders for the same reasons, have been determined not to contain wilderness values and have been excluded from wilderness consideration.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the extremely hilly and varied shape and size of the dune systems, as well as thick stands of mesquite and creosote vegetation, this area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The area's topography, accentuated by changing patterns of light, shadow, and color tend to enhance feelings of vastness and solitude. Opportunities for nature study are extremely high due to the unique plant and animal populations which are found within this area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of the comments addressing inventory criteria indicated approval for including the area for further study or expanding the present boundaries. Other comments felt that man's influence on the area was significant. Many other comments spoke to study phase factors. Examples included potential for geothermal development, recreation use, and endangered species protection.

AREA 364

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded by Interstate 8 on the north; Highway 186 on the east; and, the All-American Canal and access road on the west and south.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is all public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is relatively small, with some undulations in terrain, including the small outcrop of Pilot Knob. The area is sparsely vegetated and contains some areas of sand dunes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Portions of this area are heavily disturbed by man. Several permanent improvements and human habitations are located in and near the Pilot Knob area, including the Pilot Knob Campground and Arizona Inspection Station.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited by the relatively small size, lack of vegetation or topographic diversity and relief, and man's trammeling actions which limit freedom of movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments dealt with study phase considerations only.

AREA 365

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This long, narrow area is bordered on the north by the All-American Canal and Interstate 8 and, on the south, by the Mexico-California border.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is all public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area consists of the extremely flat southern portion of East Mesa and the southern U.S. limit of the Algodones Sand Dunes. Vegetation is sparse, but includes some creosote and mesquite.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area has been adversely altered by permanent improvements and human habitation which includes agricultural use, some housing developments, electric plants, and a highway maintenance station.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the elongated narrowness (less than one mile) opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are nearly nonexistent.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several comments discussed the geothermal potential of the area, which is a study phase consideration. One comment received attested to opportunities for solitude in this small space.

AREA 366

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangular-shaped area is bordered on the north by Interstate 8; on the south, by Highway 98; and, on the west, by maintained roads and the East Highline Canal.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

One section in the area is non-public land. The area is in a Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The majority of this area is flat, and vegetated with creosote and mesquite. This area is also a part of the East Mesa.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Except for some agricultural activity in the west, this roadless area is without permanent improvements or human habitation.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Due to the conforming size and shape, and the lack of topographic relief, opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely restricted.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Those comments which addressed inventory considerations supported the findings. Other comments addressed only study phase considerations.

AREA 367

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded by Highway 78 to the north; the Coachella Canal and access road to the east; Interstate 8 to the south; and, maintained roads and the Highline Canal to the west.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately nine or ten sections in the area are non-public lands. The area is in a Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area consists almost entirely of creosote vegetation on relatively flat and uniform terrain, with little topographic relief.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Portions of this area are affected by man and are not natural. Portions of Sections 36, (T. 15 S., R. 18 E.), and 16, (T. 16 S., R. 18 E.), and all of Section 16, (T. 16 S., R. 19 E.) have been cleared for agriculture. Several roads enter the western edge of the area. One of these roads penetrates the heart of the area to a U. S. Naval Reservation. A jeep trail from the eastern boundary connects to this reservation. Another Navy reservation to the north has recently had extensive bombing use. There is also a road to an additional Navy reservation in the northern portion. Portions of the area also have some scars from off-road vehicles. The remainder of the area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are restricted in the area due to the Navy leases, agriculture development, roads, off-road vehicle scars and flat terrain.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of the comments received disagreed with the exclusion of the area from further wilderness study. One comment dealt with the improper exclusion of a road. The area was reevaluated, and appropriate changes have been made.

AREA 368

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern border of this area is a portion of Interstate 8 and State Highway 98. The western border consists of the California Desert Conservation Area boundary. To the south is the Mexico-California border. A U.S. Border Patrol drag road is also located along a portion of the southern boundary. The eastern boundary is a maintained, graded road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About six sections of this area are non-public lands; the remainder, public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The western portion of this area consists of the In-Ko-Pah Mountains which rise above the Yuha Basin and have impeded human travel and access for centuries. Landforms in the entire area range from the gently-sloping, enclosed basin of Davies Valley to the steep-walled canyons and the pinnacles and spires of the higher summits. The area also embraces secluded native palm oases and supports Bighorn sheep. The extreme eastern portion of the roadless area consists primarily of flat terrain dissected by Palo Verde Wash. The area includes palo verde and smoke tree in the washes and some crucifixion thorn around dry lakebeds.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Along the eastern border of the In-Ko-Pah, active sand and gravel operations have reduced and sharply altered the natural condition of the landscape. To the east, improved roads to repeater sites and mines similarly affect the natural character of the land. Also the Davies Valley Road, to prospects and mining claims, has been added through the center of the area. These portions, along with dwellings in the northern section, have been excluded from further wilderness consideration. The remainder of the roadless area is affected primarily by the forces of nature. The diverse topography greatly reduces any impact from man's works, which include a few well-used primitive ways and some abandoned mining prospects.

The adjusted boundary generally follows that of the roadless area to the north and south while, to the east, it closely follows the base of the mountains and, to the west it follows Boulder Creek, some ridgetops, and the road to Smugglers Cave and the Elliot Mine.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are easily and readily available within the In-Ko-Pah Mountains. The rugged and diverse topography and terrain effectively screen visitors from one another. Numerous varieties of vegetation, including native palm groves, and the presence of Bighorn sheep all add to the primitive experience.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment was evenly divided between those who favored wilderness designation based on wilderness and ecological values, and those who felt the natural values had been impaired by the numerous vehicle routes. The area was field-checked again and changes have been made in the form of additions and deletions.

AREA 369

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary parallels Interstate 8; the eastern boundary, a maintained road west of the Westside Main Canal; the southern boundary, Highway 98; and, the western boundary, a combination of Hocker Drive Road and Highway 98.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately eight sections of non-public land scattered throughout and accounting for approximately 10 percent of the land area. The northern half of the area having wilderness values is in Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This is a diverse area of eroded badlands, buttes, desert smoke tree, washes, and broad expansive benches. Although sparsely vegetated, the landforms have extremely colorful pastel shades. Small multicolored rocks, petrified wood, sandstone concretions, and fossil-bearing sediments are highly evident. Yuha Basin is historically significant as a site of early man, and some evidence of such remains today in the form of intaglios, a grave, and artifacts. Some scattered creosote is found throughout, while some numerous stands of Ocotillo are found in the western portions.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has been affected by man and no longer retains a substantial natural character. In the western portion, private homes and ranches are found through much of the area along with associated roads and ways. Hocker Drive Road is maintained by Imperial County and an abandoned microwave relay station is located along this road. Along the northern perimeter of Highway 98, several sand and gravel operations are located, which affect the landscape in such a way that man's work is substantially noticeable. The vast majority of the eastern portion of this roadless area, east of the Oyster Shell Beds, has been used by competition motorcycle racing and is a BLM designated roads and trails area. Motorized vehicle trails and scars have substantially altered the environment so that the entire roadless area no longer retains its primeval character and influence.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are not available due to the unnatural character of the landscape.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of the inventory-related comments stated that the area was affected primarily by man. Other comments agreed with the findings. Many other comments dealt with study phase factors.

AREA 370

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This long, narrow area is bounded on the north by Highway 580; on the south, by Interstate 8; and, on the east, by a maintained road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Less than three sections are non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This is a relatively flat area, sparsely vegetated with creosote and some isolated ocotillo.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Numerous ways and related structures at Plaster City make this an area where man and his own works dominate the landscape.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are nonexistent due to the narrow confining nature as well as the inability of the land to screen visitors from one another.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received dealt with study phase considerations.

AREA 371

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the west by an industrial railroad; on the south by the Evan Hughes Highway; on the east by the Westside Main Canal; and, on the north, by the U.S. Navy Parachute Recovery Test Range.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 20 percent of the area is non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is extremely flat topography with little relief, sparsely vegetated with creosote.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Numerous ways criss-cross this area, thus the imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable due to the lack of vegetation and flat, open terrain.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNTIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely restricted by the small, confining nature of this area and inability to provide a seclusive experience.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received agreed with the findings. One comment suggested that consideration be given to wilderness values within the Naval Gunnery Range; another mentioned geothermal potential.

AREA 372

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by an industrial railroad; on the east, by the U.S. Navy Parachute Recovery Test Range; on the south, by the Evan Hughes Highway; and, on the west, by a mining access road into the Carrizo Impact Area and a portion of the Anza Borrego Desert State Park boundary called the Old Tram Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 25 percent of the area is non-public land. The mountains in the far western portion of the area consist of a solid block of non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The northern portion includes the rugged, colorful, and massive Fish Creek Mountains which contain diverse geologic and archaeologic values. Near-vertical walls and maze-like canyons dominate portions of this sparsely vegetated mountain uplift. The ancient beach line of Lake Cahuilla can be observed in the northern portion of this area. The southern portion includes Carrizo Wash and the relatively flat terrain of West Mesa. Topographic features are visibly absent, and vegetation is scattered and sparse.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The portion of the area which contains wilderness values is primarily limited to the eastern Fish Creek Mountains, which are affected primarily by the forces of nature with man's work substantially unnoticeable. Large areas to the west and south have been excluded from wilderness consideration due to degradation of their natural character. These areas include the extensive gypsum mining operation which is currently taking place in the northwestern corner; exploration and mining occurring at the terminus of the Old Tram Road; and, numerous permanent improvements and habitations, along with evidence of intensive off-road vehicle activity in the southern portion of the area. The mountains in the far western portion were excluded due to solid, non-public land status. The adjusted boundary generally conforms to the roadless area boundary to the northeast and southwest, while to the southeast it follows washes; including Carrizo Wash, at the base of the Fish Creek Mountains. To the west it generally follows the western slopes of the Fish Creek Mountains, avoiding the gypsum mine, continuing south and around a small strip of non-public land before reaching the State Park boundary at the extreme southwest corner of Section 2 (T. 14 S., R. 9 E.).

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The area in and around the Fish Creek Mountains contains outstanding opportunities for solitude. Because of the rugged topography and winding, narrow canyons, visitors are effectively shielded from one another. Diverse topography also offers challenge and a variety of primitive recreation opportunities.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments favor inclusion of the area for further wilderness study. Many also urge expansion of the potential study area southward based on high ecological values (especially in Carrizo Wash) and natural character. Field checks revealed man-made features which detracted from the area's natural character. Some comments dealt with mining and roads, which were excluded where verified through field checks.

AREA 373

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern and western boundaries are Anza Borrego Desert State Park. The eastern boundary parallels a mining access road which traverses the Carrizo Impact Area. The southern boundary follows section lines which approximately parallel the southern base of the Coyote Mountains.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately three sections of non-public land scattered throughout and accounting for approximately 5 percent of the land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area varies from the deep, steepwalled canyons, massive ridges, highly dissected badland topography, fossils, and fragile geologic phenomena of the Coyote Mountains, to the fairly flat, open bajada dissected by desert washes. Some canyons are highly colorful, with varying pastel hues of earth tones accentuated by the sparseness of vegetation. From a great many locations, outstanding views of badlands and pristine land in Anza Borrego Desert State Park are visible.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The majority of the Coyote Mountains retain their primeval character and influence and the area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. Some primitive ways and inactive mining activities do penetrate the interior but, after two seasonal hurricane rains, much of that influence has diminished and the natural condition dominates the landscape today. This area was identified by BLM in 1975 as a primitive area. A large portion has been excluded from further wilderness consideration since man's work is substantially noticeable. Along the bajada, near the base of the mountains and near the mouths of some canyons, are found sand and gravel operations as well as a refuse dump. The southeastern portion has permanent improvements and human habitation in the form of several houses and mobile homes, utility pole lines, and numerous residential roads. The road into Painted Gorge also has been excluded as has the large area around Carrizo Mountain due to the numerous mining roads and active claims which have severely altered the natural appearance of the landscape.

The potential wilderness study area boundary follows the roadless area boundary along the north and west. The southern boundary is located at the base of the Coyote Mountains to exclude mining and areas impacted by off-road vehicle use. The eastern boundary parallels Fossil Canyon and skirts around the mining activity on and around Carrizo Mountain.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The rugged and often vertical nature of the Coyote Mountains, combined with isolated interior badlands, tends to screen visitors from one another; thus, opportunities for solitude are outstanding. Outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are readily available due to the varied terrain, abundance of challenging topography, and importance for geological and ecological study.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The relatively large volume of comments was substantially in support of this area as a potential Wilderness Study Area. Some felt the area should be expanded to the south and east. Those public comments opposed to wilderness study designation identified the roads, mining activity, and off-road vehicle use in the general area. These areas have been excluded from the potential Wilderness Study Area. Other comments addressed study phase considerations.

AREA 374

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Located adjacent to the eastern boundary of Anza Borrego Desert State Park, the site is roughly rectangular in shape. Its boundaries are formed by Highway 78 to the north; a graded dirt road and company railroad to the south; a north-south powerline right-of-way to the east; and, a graded dirt road to the west, leading into mines in the Fish Creek Mountains.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Because of the checkerboard land pattern this area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments addressed natural condition of the area, but failed to consider the public land status. Additional comments dealt with study phase considerations.

AREA 375

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is located north of, and adjacent to, the U.S. Navy Parachute Recovery Test Range, south of Salton Sea. Its boundaries are defined by a north-south powerline right-of-way and associated road to the west; Highway 78 to the north; a powerline right-of-way and road to the east; and, the Test Range to the south.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Because of the checkerboard land pattern this roadless area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments addressed natural condition, but failed to consider the public land status. Additional comments dealt with study phase considerations.

AREA 376

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area's western border is common with the eastern border of Anza Borrego Desert State Park. The northern boundary is Highway S-22; the southern, Highway 78; and, on the east, an improved and maintained powerline right-of-way.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The northern half of the area is entirely public land. The southern half is approximately 30 percent public land in checkerboard pattern.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The terrain is varied, and provides a transition between the flat areas near the Salton Sea and the more mountainous, rugged lands of the state park to the west. Except for washes and low rolling hills, the eastern portions offer little interest. The flat sandy surface gradually erodes into a system of badlands which extend into the park. As in the surrounding areas, vegetation is extremely limited, both in varieties and numbers. Creosote is the dominant plant, although no large specimens or dense stands can be found. The sandy surface supports mesquite, which provides a nucleus for the large number of hummocks found there.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The natural conditions have been degraded by both structures and grading. A microwave tower and support facilities are located in the northern section. The height of the tower, along with the flatness of the terrain, makes it visible in many portions. An airport with limited equipment is operating in the southeastern part near the park border. Off-road vehicle use has been extensive in the past and the naturalness of the area has been severely reduced by the network of trails and ways resulting from this activity.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The site does not provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The low, rolling, uniform landform, in conjunction with the sparse, low vegetation, preclude any sense of isolation, except in scattered local situations. A large percentage of the site is generally flat and uniform and, by itself, would not satisfy the requirements for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. This is balanced by the more diverse landforms available in the western areas, near the park. In terms of the entire site, outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation can be found.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments were evenly divided between those favoring and those opposing inclusion of this area as a potential Wilderness Study Area. Comments for inclusion dealt more with the possibilities of joint managment with Anza-Borrego Desert State Park than with specific inventory criteria.

AREA 376A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The site is located to the east of Anza Borrego Desert State Park and shares a common boundary. The eastern edge is formed by Highway 86, and the southern by Highway S-22. The northern portion borders the Torres Martinez Indian Reservation.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 70 percent public lands. Non-public holdings occur in a checkerboard pattern in the northern third.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area contains a low, rolling badlands topography with very sparse vegetation. Creosote Bush Scrub is the dominant plant with occasional mesquite.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The landscape is marred by off-road vehicle scars which penetrate up the washes and over many of the low hills. Though not heavily scarred in any one region, these scars are general throughout.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The low, rolling topography and the sparse vegetation do not provide opportunities for solitude. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are available, but not outstanding, due to the numerous tracks from off-road vehicles.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments challenged the interpretation of solitude and supported inclusion of the area for further study. Another spoke to its unnatural character. Others dealt with study phase issues.

AREA 377

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is roughly triangular in shape and located southeast of the Salton Sea, along Highway 86. The boundaries are formed by Highway 86 on the east; Highway 78 on the south; and, on the west, by a powerline right-of-way and support road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public land because of the checkerboard ownership pattern nor is it of sufficient size to make potential its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Being part of an ancient lake bed, the site is relatively flat throughout. Primary relief from this uniformity is provided by some very low, rolling hills, hummocks and washes. Soil composition is basically "sandy" in nature and, as such, areas of blown sand and shallow depressions are scattered throughout. Vegetation throughout the area is generally sparse. Creosote is the visually dominant plant in most areas, and some mesquite can be found in the hummocks.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Within the confines provided by the highways and powerlines, the site has remained relatively natural and there are no permanent structures visible. It appears that the area is used frequently for random off-road vehicle play. Tracks and debris associated with this type of activity are in evidence throughout and generally degrade the natural appearance of the site.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

A true sense of solitude is difficult to obtain within the boundaries. The terrain is flat and, although some shielding could be obtained, it would only be for brief periods. Plant life is not only sparse, but also very low, and would not contribute to a feeling of isolation. The site's shape, relief, and location preclude outstanding opportunities for solitude. Any outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are extremely limited by the uniformity of the landform.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments addressed natural conditions within the area, but failed to consider land ownership pattern.

PART III: DESIGNATED WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS AND ACREAGES

The following numbered roadless areas have been designated by the State Director, California, as Wilderness Study Areas. These areas will receive intensive study by the BLM Desert Plan Staff and will remain under BLM Interim Management until final Congressional determination. Public lands not identified as Wilderness Study Areas will no longer be subject to the management restrictions imposed by Section 603 of FLPMA.

AREA NUMBER	PUBLIC LAND ACREAGE	AREA NUMBER	PUBLIC LAND ACREAGE	AREA NUMBER	PUBLIC LAND ACREAGE
100	456	124	56,690	150A	13,779
100A	407	127	90,427	154	33,914
101	897	130	8,102	156	113,901
102	12,585	131	24,873	157	25,207
103	7,784	132	5,972	158	36,023
104	3,729	132A	8,319	159	5,564
105	5,729	132B	21,099	160	4,067
107A	851	134	36,949	160B	6,826
111	14,983	136	52,696	160C	1,036
112	36,287	137	33,390	163	9,225
115	69,282	137A	8,532	164	17,064
117	405,215	142	89,528	170	32,208
117A	6,560	143	46,529	172	7,040
118	7,951	145	89,772	173	7,260
119	32,876	147	123,131	173A	13,875
120	11,465	148	54,022	184	12,798
121	5,760	149	33,929	186	7,602
122	87,145	149A	2,346	206	21,968
123	23,604	150	109,701	207	25,037

AREA NUMBER	PUBLIC LAND ACREAGE	AREA NUMBER	PUBLIC LAND ACREAGE	AREA NUMBER	PUBLIC LAND ACREAGE
217	53,219	245	18,714	292	36,450
218	6,400	249	64,273	294	111,685
218A	9,610	250	124,518	295	29,434
219	8,611	251	65,177	299	100,826
220	5,320	251A	14,447	300	17,889
221	87,831	252	18,333	304	26,912
221A	29,435	256	72,206	304A	13,414
222	255,058	258	18,423	305	135,827
222A	17,064	258A	23,238	307	229,241
223	23,125	259	29,178	310	57,229
225	44,317	260	37,787	312	81,548
225A	8,105	262	23,938	321	50,538
227	14,107	263	51,057	322	48,845
228	26,422	264	13,300	325	239,878
235A	10,452	265	35,583	328	52,992
237	11,092	266	36,239	328A	8,532
237A	2,560	267	37,561	334	49,723
237B	3,200	270	7,556	334A	4,480
238A	2,976	271	37,758	335	24,710
238B	15,333	272	32,477	341	68,051
239	44,992	276	29,411	343	15,655
242	106,641	288	17,063	344	44,195
243	49,301	288A	10,984	348	126,057
244	16,019	290	9,136	350	44,422

AREA NUMBER	PUBLIC LAND ACREAGE	AREA NUMBER	PUBLIC LAND ACREAGE	AREA NUMBER	PUBLIC LAND ACREAGE
245	18,714	300	17,889	373	8,766
249	64,273	304	26,912	TOTALS	
250	124,518	304A	13,414	138 Areas	
251	65,177	305	135,827		5,520,518 Acres

PART IV: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE CDCA WILDERNESS INVENTORY

The Bureau of Land Management sought and received extensive public input from individuals and organizations in developing, preparing, and producing the maps and descriptive narratives for the California Desert Conservation Area Wilderness Inventory. The inventory was conducted in three stages: Interim, Draft, and Final, with changes made at each stage in response to new or additional public input or comment and intensive field review.

BLM field personnel traveled the 25-million-acre California Desert Conservation Area, making on-the-ground investigations, followed by field checks and rechecks of specific areas. Resource surveys developed by the BLM Desert Plan Staff and its contractors, and on-site determinations were used in analyses and determinations of existing resources. Individual members of the team visited with local residents, and with representatives of local government, conservation, environmental, and user organizations, and adjoining private and corporate landowners.

During preparation of the inventory, consultations were held at the working level with Federal agencies having special expertise or responsibility in the area, and with various State and local agencies having the same expertise or responsibilities.

Individual consultations were conducted with several members of the California Desert Conservation Area Advisory Committee during the preparation phases. In addition, status reports were made to the Advisory Committee in public session at regular meetings May 11-14, July 20-21, September 27-29 and December 1-2 in 1978, as well as February 1-2, 1979. During the September 1978 meeting, a special presentation was made on the Draft inventory documents. At the February 1979 CDCAAC meeting, a full day seminar was conducted to explain and discuss both the inventory and the forthcoming study phases of the CDCA Wilderness review.

A. Consultation and Coordination

The CDCA Wilderness process began in April 1978, with a public briefing in Sacramento to explain the inventory process and procedures. Copies of the BLM Draft Procedures were mailed to several thousand persons, agencies, and organizations on the mailing lists within the six BLM Districts in California. News releases and television and radio public service announcements were also prepared and transmitted to reach as wide an audience as possible.

In May 1978, 17 public briefings were conducted, and were widely advertised and well-attended at each location. Each of these briefings was followed, the next day, by drop-in workshops where BLM personnel were available to discuss specific areas marked on a Preliminary CDCA Wilderness Inventory Map. Public input as to road locations and wilderness characteristics was sought and received at these workshops. Following is a list of briefings, workshops, dates, and attendance:

Location	Briefing Date	Attendance	Workshop Date	Attendance
Anaheim	5/2	1100	5/3	300
Barstow	5/3	108	5/4	35
Bakersfield	5/4	75	5/5	6
Lone Pine	5/8	48	5/9	47
Victorville	5/8	110	5/9	30
Bishop	5/10	45	5/11	50
Indio	5/11	150	5/12	33
El Centro	5/11	100	5/12	30
Los Angeles	5/15	165	5/16	150
San Diego	5/17	100	5/18	55
Ridgecrest	5/17	185	5/18	45
Baker	5/22	28	5/23	6
Yucca Valley	5/23	55	5/24	16
Needles	5/24	50	5/25	8
Blythe	5/24	43	5/25	4
San Francisco	5/25	55	5/26	15
Riverside	5/30	165	5/31	35
		2624		901

As a result of the May briefings, a wilderness mailing list of 3,400 individuals was compiled to receive further notices and information on the progress of the inventory and the opportunity to contribute to the analysis. In addition, a 30-day public review and comment period was extended an additional 15 days to July 15 to receive all possible input on the Preliminary Map in order to develop an Interim Inventory Map and Descriptive Narratives.

Notices were mailed to all appropriate groups, agencies and individuals early in August that the Interim Wilderness Inventory Map and narrative would be available August 18. Locations dates and times were provided for informal, open house, drop-in workshops to be conducted in the latter part of August to recieve public input to this map. Notices were posted in 120 Post Offices in six Southern California counties and all available media routes were utilized. Through Federal Register notice, a 30-day public review and comment period was established requesting comment and input on the Interim Inventory Map.

Twelve workshops were conducted, as listed below, to provide the opportunity for the public to confer directly, and informally, with BLM inventory personnel, and to provide additional information:

Locations	Dates	Attendance
San Francisco	8/28	23
Needles	8/28	17
Van Nuys	8/29	101
Barstow	8/29	76
Riverside	8/30	72
Trona	8/30	207
San Diego	8/31	56
Ridgecrest	8/31	87
Santa Ana	9/6	143
Lone Pine	9/6	38
El Centro	9/7	23
Palm Springs	9/7	33

In September 1978, 15,000 inquiry letters were sent to addresses on BLM District mailing lists, BLM grazing mailing lists, and the BLM NEWSBEAT mailing list, soliciting names of additional interested persons to be added to the Wilderness mailing list. The result was a mailing list of over 7,000 names of persons and organizations.

In October 1978, through statewide news releases and direct mail, as well as publication of a Federal Register notice, BLM advertised the availability of the Draft CDCA Wilderness Inventory Map and Descriptive Narratives on November 1, 1978. A 90-day public review and comment period was also established between November 1, 1978, and january 31, 1979.

Formal public meetings, conducted by Administrative Law Judges from the U.S. Department of the Interior, were conducted in December 1978, at the follow locations:

Location	Date	Attendees	Speakers
Sacramento	12/4	47	22
Needles	12/5	24	10
Los Angeles	12/6	60	24
Barstow	12/7	39	22
Riverside	12/8	114	39
Santa Ana	12/11	106	23
Trona	12/12	52	28
San Diego	12/13	162	33
Lone Pine	12/14	28	7
El Centro	12/15	97	40

Testimony at the meetings was recorded by a court reporter and copies of the transcripts were made a part of the public record for use in preparing the Final Inventory Map and Narratives. Maps and exhibits provided by the public were formally accepted at these meetings and made a part of the permanent record.

The panel assisting the Administrative Law Judge at each formal public meeting was composed of a member of the California Desert Conservation Area Advisory Committee, a BLM District Manager, and a BLM Area Manager.

In summary, 57 public meetings or workshops were conducted during the CDCA Wilderness Inventory, with a verified total attendance of 5,378 persons.

Following is a list of governmental agencies, private corporations, groups, and organizations with which BLM Team conducted continuing consultation and coordination:

FEDERAL AGENCIES

1. Sequoia National Forest
2. San Bernardino National Forest
3. Death Valley National Monument
4. Inyo National Forest
5. United States Fish and Wildlife Service
6. Havasu National Wildlife Refuge
7. Cleveland National Forest
8. Joshua Tree National Monument
9. U.S. Geological Survey
10. George Air Force Base (USAF)

STATE AGENCIES

1. California Department of Fish and Game
2. California Department of Parks and Recreation
3. California State Lands Commission
4. California Department of Water Resources
5. California Air Resources Board
6. California Energy Commission
7. California State Clearing House
8. The Resources Agency of California
9. Arizona Department of Fish and Game
10. Nevada Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
11. Nevada State Clearinghouse
12. Nevada Governor's Office of Planning Coordination

LOCAL AGENCIES

1. Bishop Chamber of Commerce
2. Antelope Valley Resource Conservation District
3. San Bernardino County Farm Bureau
4. Dept. of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, Harvard Medical School
5. Deep Springs College
6. Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce
7. Department of Water and Power, Los Angeles
8. Intermountain Power Project
9. Riverside County Board of Supervisors & Planning Commission
10. San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and Planning Comm.
11. Imperial County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission
12. San Diego County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission
13. Orange County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission
14. Kern County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission
15. Inyo County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission
16. Mono County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission
17. Kings County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission
18. Tulare County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission
19. Fresno County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission
20. Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and Planning Comm.
21. San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors and Planning Comm.
22. Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and Planning Comm.

PRIVATE INDUSTRY CORPORATIONS

1. Southern Pacific Land Co.

2. Pfizer, Inc.
3. LEECO Manufacturing Co.
4. National Gypsum Co.
5. ASARCO, Inc.
6. Thompson, Weiman & Co.
7. Hillyer & Irwin
8. Abbott Laboratories
9. Inspiration Development Co.
10. Southern California Edison Co.
11. Envirotech Process Equipment
12. Plaza Radiological Medical Group
13. Farnsworth, Denison and Saperstein
14. Starzkraft
15. U.S. Borax
16. Molycorp
17. Trona Chemicals
18. Callahan Mining Corporation
19. Kerr-McGee Chemical Corp.
20. Frontier Resources, Inc.

CONSERVATION AND USER ORGANIZATIONS

1. World Rockhound Association
2. California Association of 4-Wheel Drive Clubs
3. Desert Watch (Sierra Club)
4. Wilderness Society of America
5. American Motorcycle Association, District 37

6. Sierra Club
7. Desert Protective Council
8. California Off Road Vehicle Association (CORVA)
9. California Mining Association
10. National Audubon Society
11. Mojave Valley Museum Association
12. The South Coast Geological Society
13. The Nature Conservancy
14. Blythe Equestrian Club
15. Friends of Nevada Wilderness
16. California Native Plant Society
17. California Federation of Mineralogical Societies
18. Santa Lucia Chapter (Sierra Club)
19. El Dorado Audubon
20. Del-Air Rockhounds Club
21. Conservation Call
22. Conservation Training Network
23. California Wilderness Coalition
24. Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs
25. Desomount Club

B. Use of Comments and Input

Specific public input concerning the presence or absence of roads, ways and trails, structures, fences, mines or mining claims, and other items which might affect wilderness characteristics, were used in developing the inventory process. Opinions and suggestions as to the relative existence of wilderness values were used in developing the descriptive narratives for each inventoried roadless area. Such specific input was checked against existing documentation, as well as in the field during on-site checks.

Although three different periods (45 days, 30 days, and 90 days) were designated as official public review and comment periods, the entire period from May 1, 1978, through January 31, 1979, was considered to be one continuing comment period and was treated as such.

A separate file was established for each numbered area. Specific written or recorded oral comments on the inventory were placed in the file of the area to which they referred. These files are available for public examination. Action taken regarding each comment disposition was noted on the comment document itself. Oral comments given as testimony at the formal public hearings were transcribed by court reporters. Those transcripts were studied and summarized on individual cards for each area, with the cards initialed and dated by the reviewer and placed in the individual area file.

General comments, which pertained more to philosophical views than to specific inventory considerations, were grouped in a general file and responded to through a question and answer section, which is available in Section C of this document. The questions are grouped according to subject and so answered.

Each written comment received in the mail was acknowledged, with the correspondent being notified that the comment would be considered and applied when and as appropriate.

Each Descriptive Narrative of the final document contains a separate "Summary of Comments" paragraph, which summarized all comments and noted what changes had been made in the map and the narrative as a result of the information provided.

Many of the comments and the informational material received did not apply to the inventory phase and did not address inventory criteria. Rather, they were directed to consideration which would be a part of the Wilderness Study Phase. (See PART V of this document). All comments, these included, have been provided to the BLM Desert Plan Staff, Wilderness, 3610 Central Ave., Suite 402, Riverside, CA 92506 for further use during the study phase.

C. Questions and Answers

1. Will the County Planning Department be required to produce or provide a land use zoning designation for wilderness? If so, who will provide the legal descriptions? Will private parcels within these inventory sites be allowed development or be guaranteed access? In case of fire, storm water runoff, or health hazards, will the respective County agency have any power or right to encroach on wilderness areas for the protection and safety of adjacent or isolated private parcels in these areas?

   ANSWER: The County is not required to provide a wilderness zoning classification. Private land is not considered part of the Wilderness Study Area. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976, requires application to BLM for a right-of-way to parcels of private or non-public land. The Bureau does not have to provide motorized vehicular access. Access could be horse or foot travel to non-public land inholdings.

2. If lands are designated by Congress as wilderness, what sort of access would be allowed?

   ANSWER: At the time BLM submits to Congress a recommendation for wilderness designation, it will be accompanied by a management plan. The plan will present, among other items, the plan for access into the proposed wilderness area. The possibility of motorized access into wilderness areas is unlikely.

3. When the Bureau of land Management sends geologists out to study areas for mineral content, will they look for all ore deposits, or just ore deposits that are now known?

   ANSWER: All mineral deposits.

4. Will the Bureau of Land Management answer all of the questions submitted to them at public meetings for specific areas? Will the answers be complete or only random notification and form letters?

   ANSWER: Two kinds of questions have been received from the beginning of the CDCA Wilderness Inventory. Those dealing with topics other than specific information regarding specific roadless areas have been grouped or combined in this question and answer section. The specific comments regarding inventory maps or narratives, regardless of whether they were mailed in, gathered at public workshops, or received at the public meetings in December, were treated identically. Each comment is in the working file with its disposition written in the margins of the page. No comment-by-comment answer will be made. The files are open to public review.

5. In regard to land that is being considered for wilderness study, would there be full use of it while it is under study? Are there areas that will not be open to people?

   ANSWER: On January 12, 1979, the Bureau of Land Management published pending Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Wilderness Study Areas for public review and comment. Copies of this document can be obtained from District and State BLM Offices. Copies of this document were sent to all people who were on the CDCA mailing list at that time.

6. If we are mining now, have taken some tonnage out and processed it through, will the Bureau of Land Management stop us from doing this at this time or later?

   ANSWER: The only place you could be affected is if you are on Public Land within a designated Wilderness Study Area. If you are, then the principal issue is the date the mining operation began. All existing mining activities may continue in the same manner and degree in which they were being conducted on October 21, 1976. If the mining activities were not in operation on October 21, 1976, they must be conducted so as not to impair the suitability of the area for preservation as wilderness. This is addressed in the pending

Interim Management Policy for Wilderness Study Areas now under public review.

7. Why don't you file an Environmental Impact Statement on this program?

   ANSWER: Environmental Impact Statements will be prepared as part of the wilderness recommendations to Congress. An EIS is also being prepared for the California Desert Conservation Area Plan, which will make recommendations for wilderness designation in the California desert.

8. What criteria will be applied to determine economic potential?

   ANSWER: Economic conditions are not a part of the wilderness inventory. Economic impacts will be fully considered in the California Desert Plan.

9. What becomes of all the State school land that is locked up in the wilderness area should it become a total wilderness?

   ANSWER: If an area is recommended for wilderness designation, such inholdings must be addressed in the management plan. They might be considered for acquisition or exchange on a case-by-case basis and referenced in the legislative proposal for an area. Many of these lands are isolated now, with no means of access.

10. Which of the Bureau of Land Management offices is coordinating the Wilderness Inventory program with the National Park Service in areas adjacent to Death Valley National Monument?

ANSWER: Such coordination is provided by FLPMA. The CDCA wilderness inventory was coordinated principally through the Bureau Wilderness Inventory Team in Riverside. Coordination will continue through the wilderness study phase by the BLM Desert Planning Staff, also located in Riverside.

11. The establishment of wilderness areas west of Death Valley National Monument would lead to an easy extension of the Monument itself. Is this something that is planned?

ANSWER: There is no plan to have lands west of Death Valley National Monument come under the management of the National Park Service. This question will be considered in the California Desert Plan. Whether wilderness designation by Congress on some of those lands would be cause for additional interest for incorporating additional lands in the National Monument is unknown.

12. What impact will the wilderness study have on mountain sheep?

ANSWER: The study of an area for wilderness would not have an impact on mountain sheep. The establishment of an area as wilderness could have adverse or beneficial impacts which would be analyzed as part of the study process in making such a recommendation.

13. A road is not included in a Wilderness Study Area, but what happens to the land on either side of the road? Is that still wilderness?

ANSWER: Yes, if the land meets wilderness value criteria. Otherwise, no.

14. The map does not show all the roads to mining claims. Will those be honored?

ANSWER: Roads to mining claims have been shown on the inventory maps. If such a road was missed, it can be added when so identified. Routes of travel to mining claims that do not meet the definition of roads are not shown on the map. Routes of travel not shown as roads are considered impacts on the natural landscape and are frequently mentioned singularly or in groupings in the narrative statement. Where impacts merit such action, they may have resulted in exclusions from further wilderness consideration of all or part of the roadless area.

15. If an area is now closed, with a BLM sign up, is there a possibility that this will be reconsidered? Could this be just an inventory situation?

ANSWER: No areas in the CDCA are now posted closed because they are found to have wilderness values. Such closures are a result of other situations and the public is advised to contact the BLM Area Manager for information on a case-by-case basis.

16. Will information gathered by agencies such as the California Department of Mines and Geology, the Bureau of Mines, the USGS, etc., on the Natural Uranium Resource Evaluation program be used in determining whether or not an area is going to be withdrawn as a wilderness area? Will it have any bearing?

ANSWER: Yes. The study phase will consider all resource values present in an area. It will assess the mineral values as well as wilderness values and may, in some instances, propose mineral development as the best use of a Wilderness Study Area.

17. There are roads shown on AAA maps, County maps, and USGS maps that are not shown on the wilderness map. Why?

ANSWER: The Bureau is unable to identify the criteria used in preparing these maps by the respective companies or agencies. However, the road definition used in the wilderness inventory program is not necessarily the same as those used in developing other programs or publications. As an example, the Interim Critical Management Program for ORV use on the California desert defined a road in a different manner in order to facilitate that program's objectives. Since the wilderness program is legislated through Congress, legislative interpretation and history are significant factors in an agency's interpretation of wilderness. The road definition for the wilderness inventory is taken exactly from the legislative history of FLPMA, the House of Representatives Report 94-1163, page 17, May 15, 1976.

18. Will owners of valid mining operations be remunerated in some way for the loss of their mining properties if Congress isolates their operation by wilderness designation?

ANSWER: Designation of wilderness will consider and must recognize all valid existing rights.

19. What will be the constraints on the use of the land? What will be the management of land that does not end up as wilderness? Are the same definitions and constraints on vehicular use and the definitions of roads going to be applied to all of an area, or is that just to the land which is being considered as wilderness?

ANSWER: The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976, requires BLM to manage the public lands under a multiple use management program as defined in Section 202(c) of that Act. Lands found not suitable for wilderness will also be studied and the best multiple use(s) selected, such as minerals, recreation, grazing and geothermal. Appropriate criteria will be used to assess each activity separately. The point is, wilderness will not be an alternative in those areas where no wilderness values are found, and the use of wilderness-related definitions would be inappropriate in determining the best uses.

Vehicular restrictions and the wilderness definition of roads pertain only to Wilderness Study Areas during the interim management period until such time as Congress determines suitability for wilderness. Other vehicular restrictions in the California desert will be analyzed in the CDCA Plan.

20. There was a vehicle use plan put out in 1974. Do you expect that sort of thing will still be in effect in the lands that are not classified as wilderness?

ANSWER: Yes, with possible revisions. This plan was an interim plan for ORVs while the CDCA Plan was being prepared. ORVs are one of the CDCA Plan components and will be considered in identifying suitable areas for such activities in the new plan.

21. Does the new road definition apply to the Desert Planning Project or is it to be used on lands other than this special project?

ANSWER: The road definition contained in the Bureau's Wilderness Inventory Handbook of September 27, 1978, will be used Bureauwide in completing wilderness inventories. This definition differs slightly from the definition authorized in the California Desert Wilderness Program. However, the difference was checked and found to be insignificant for purposes of the CDCA wilderness inventory.

22. How can your map gain the respect of the public when the Inventory Team has had an almost 100 per cent change of team members since its inception?

ANSWER: There has not been a significant change in the team. Several members left, but only two replacements were added. The Wilderness Inventory Team for the CDCA is composed of those BLM employees from the Bakersfield and Riverside Districts and the Desert Planning Staff who have all been involved in the inventory study and interim management of the CDCA. By having different team members each time an area was re-evaluated, it was felt there would be less bias shown. The two new team members, therefore, served as an extra check on work done earlier. Also, the thousands of individual citizens who have taken time to give input into this program have helped considerably in the task.

23. Will the transcripts of December meetings be available to the public?

ANSWER: Yes. The Bureau has copies which can be examined at the Desert Planning Office in Riverside. Copies can be obtained through the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

24. How does BLM propose to acquire private lands and convert them into wilderness areas?

ANSWER: The Wilderness Study process and preliminary management plan will evaluate the needs to acquire private lands on an area-by-area basis. Those private lands identified for acquisition in order to round out a wilderness unit would generally be acquired through negotiated purchases with owners; in special instances where key parcels are identified as being very important to the manageability of a prime area, a request can be submitted to Congress as part of the legislative proposal for condemnation authority. Condemnation authority is normally granted on a case-by-case basis.

25. Will you accept our suggestions, as users, as to the definition of a road?

ANSWER: No. The Bureau of Land Management, in conjunction with the legislative record and an extensive period of public review, has defined a road for the purposes of completing the wilderness inventory process as required by Section 603 of FLPMA. This definition is contained in the Bureau's Wilderness Inventory Handbook of September 27, 1978.

26. Under the Law of Prescription, any road that has been used continuously for seven years is a public road. That is a State law. Is it a Federal law?

ANSWER: No.

27. The change in road definition does not apply to the California desert -- why?

ANSWER: CDCA Wilderness inventory was authorized as a special project on February 6, 1978, and included a specific road definition. The Wilderness Inventory Handbook definition of September 27, 1978 has been found to be compatible with the earlier authorized definition.

28. How can an area that has almost half of it in private ownership be considered for wilderness?

ANSWER: The wilderness inventory process involves only wilderness characteristics of contiguous public lands administered by the BLM within roadless areas. Non-Bureau lands are not inventoried as part of the wilderness study areas.

29. With reference to the Geological Survey for mineral values, will the results be made public so that we can be aware and know which areas, in your opinion, contain mineral values?

ANSWER: USGS and Bureau of Mines reports on mineral values found in BLM suitable wilderness study areas will be available to the public as part of the public record.

30. With reference to FLPMA, during the period of review, areas will be permitted continuation of existing mining and grazing uses -- does that mean that this will exist only during the period of review and, once the review is ended, the existing mining and grazing uses will cease?

ANSWER: No. Mining and grazing use may continue in wilderness if such activity is carried on in a manner compatible with the preservation of the wilderness and environmental values.

31. If an area becomes wilderness, can it be prospected again?

ANSWER: The Wilderness Act currently authorizes the filing of new claims in existing wilderness until 1983. Unless legislation is enacted extending this deadline, prospecting will not be permitted after that date.

32. Does failure to identify every route of travel, their present uses, frequency of use, and who uses them, result in a bias to wilderness?

ANSWER: All routes of travel that the Bureau has knowledge of are included in the inventory. Routes shown on the inventory map consist of (1) routes meeting the road definition; (2) routes providing access to private property; and (3) routes that otherwise demonstrate clear economic purpose. Other routes of travel were evaluted for purpose and frequency of use prior to their consideration as a road. In these cases, they were evaluated as impacts upon the natural values of the roadless areas.

PART V: WILDERNESS STUDY PHASE PROCEDURES

The Wilderness Study Phase for the California Desert Conservation Area will be conducted by the BLM Desert Planning Staff. The study phase involves the process of determining, through careful analysis, which Wilderness Study Areas will be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and which will be recommended as non-suitable. These determinations, made through the BLM land-use planning system, will consider all values, resources, and uses of the public lands.

Each of the Wilderness Study Areas will be fully evaluated by the Desert Plan Staff. The evaluations will be embodied within the overall planning framework for the development of the California Desert Plan. Each area will be analyzed in terms of 13 criteria: size, natural condition, solitude, recreational opportunity, ecological uniqueness and diversity, geological uniqueness and diversity, scenery, adjacent wilderness, manageability, accessibility, previous recreational use, historical and cultural values, and uniqueness relative to areas within the CDCA which have been established or administratively endorsed as wilderness by other Federal agencies.

The wilderness values of each of the Wilderness Study Areas will be compared with values for other resources uses which may be incompatible with wilderness; for example, mining, vehicular access, public utilities, development. A multiple-use planning approach will consider all uses. Decision guidelines will consider production and consumption as well as sensitive resources.

A separate booklet, "WORKBOOK", accompanies this document, and will give the reader guidelines for providing public input to the Wilderness Study Phase. Your comments are invited. They should be received by June 1, 1979, and should be addressed to: BLM Desert Plan Staff Wilderness, 3610 Central Avenue, Suite 402, Riverside, CA 92506.

Public meetings are expected to be scheduled on this subject prior to completion of the Draft California Desert Plan in January 1980.

PART VI: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Terms used in the CDCA Wilderness Inventory are defined.

ACCESS ROADS	roads leading from intercity routes to a specific site such as a house, mining operation, or water tank.
ADMINISTRATIVELY-ENDORSED	areas proposed for wilderness by the National Park Service which have been endorsed by the Administration and are currently pending action by Congress.
ALLUVIAL FAN	a fan-shaped deposit formed by a stream where the velocity is abruptly decreased, as at the mouth of a ravine or at the foot of a mountain.
BAJADA	an alluvial plain formed at the base of a mountain by the joining of several alluvial fans.
CDCA	California Desert Conservation Area
CHECKERBOARD	a land pattern of alternating 640-sections where common ownership occurs only at section corners.
CONTIGUOUS	lands or legal subdivisions having a common boundary; lands having only a common corner are not contiguous.
DESIGNATED ROADS AND TRAILS	vehicle travel permitted only on roads and trails designated by BLM.
INVENTORY UNIT	area(s) or island(s) of public land indexed for easy reference at the start of the wilderness inventory.
NON-PUBLIC LANDS	lands that are under private or corporate ownership, or under the administration of government agencies other than the Bureau of Land Management; e.g., State of California or local agencies.

OPEN AREA(S)	vehicle travel permitted anywhere in the area if the vehicle is operated responsibly in accordance with regulations.
OUTSTANDING	(1) standing out among others of its kind; conspicuous; prominent. (2) superior to others of its kind; distinguished; excellent.
POTENTIAL WILDERNESS STUDY AREA	area containing 5,000 or more acres of public land, roadless, and possessing 2(c) characteristics defined in 1964 Wilderness Act.
PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION	non-motorized and undeveloped types of outdoor recreational activities.
PUBLIC LANDS	any land and interest in land owned by the United States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management, without regard to how the United States acquired ownership, except: --lands located on the Outer Continental Shelf --lands held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos, and --lands where the United States retains the mineral interest, but the surface is privately-owned.
RARE II	areas proposed by the United States Forest Service for wilderness designation under the criteria of the Wilderness Act of 1964.
RARE AND ENDANGERED	State of California terminology for identification of certain plants: (1) a rare plant is one that exists in only one or a very few restricted localities, occurs in such small numbers that it is seldom seen or collected regardless of its total range, or exists only on a type of habitat that could disappear or change for any reason; (2) an endangered plant is one threatened with extinction and not likely to survive if causal factors now at work continue operating.

RIPARIAN	dwelling on the bank of a river or other body of water.
ROAD	for the purposes of the Wilderness Inventory, the following definition has been adopted: "The word 'roadless' refers to the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road." (NOTE: This definition differs slightly from the definition used in the BLM Draft Procedures; however, the difference was checked and found to be insignificant for purposes of the CDCA Wilderness Inventory.)
ROADLESS AREA	that area bounded by a road using the edge of the physical change that creates the road or the adjacent edge of right-of-way, other ownership, or water, as a boundary.
SCREENING	Topographic or vegetative features that block, cover, or obscure views of man's activities, past or present, or of other persons within a roadless area.
SOLITUDE	(1) the state of being alone or remote from habitations; isolation. (2) a lonely, unfrequented, or secluded place.
THREATENED AND ENDANGERED	Federal terminology for identification of certain species: (1) an endangered species means any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range (2) a threatened species means any species which is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

WILDERNESS	the definition contained in Section 2 (c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 891).
WILDERNESS AREA	an area formally designated by Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.
WILDERNESS INVENTORY	an evaluation of the public lands in the form of a written description and map showing those lands that meet the wilderness criteria established under Section 603 (a) of FLPMA and Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act.
WILDERNESS PROGRAM	term used to describe all wilderness activities of the Bureau, including identification, management, and administrative functions.
WILDERNESS REPORTING	the process of preparing the report on each wilderness study area and submitting that report to the President and Congress, through the Secretary of the Interior.
WILDERNESS REVIEW	the term used to cover the entire wilderness inventory, study, and reporting phases of the BLM wilderness program.
WILDERNESS STUDY	the process of analyzing and planning wilderness preservation opportunities within the BLM Planning System.
WITHDRAWN LANDS	areas where action has been taken by the Interior Secretary to withdraw certain Public Lands from uses under public land or mining laws.

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PUBLIC INPUT GUIDELINES
FOR THE
WILDERNESS STUDY PHASE
AND
CALIFORNIA DESERT PLANNING PROGRAM

WORKBOOK

U. S. Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
DESERT PLAN STAFF

MARCH 15, 1979

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HOW THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT WILL DEAL WITH WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

The State Director of the Bureau of Land Management in California has identified "Wilderness Study Areas" (WSA's) within the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA), based on a completed "CDCA Wilderness Inventory". These have been indicated on a separate map which accompanies this booklet. Both are available to the general public. Each of the Wilderness Study Areas will be fully evaluated by the Desert Plan Staff of the Bureau of Land Management. The evaluations will be embodied within the overall planning framework for the development of the California Desert Plan.

First, Wilderness Study Areas will be analyzed in terms of thirteen "Wilderness Quality Evaluation" criteria. They are:

(1) Size
(2) Natural Condition
(3) Solitude
(4) Recreational Opportunity
(5) Ecological Uniqueness and Diversity
(6) Geological Uniqueness and Diversity
(7) Scenery
(8) Adjacent Wilderness
(9) Manageability
(10) Accessibility
(11) Previous Recreational Use
(12) Historical and Cultural Values
(13) Uniqueness Relative to Areas Within the California Desert Conservation Area Which Have Been Established and/or Administratively Endorsed by Other Federal Agencies as Wilderness

This process will help the BLM assess the *relative* qualities of one WSA as compared with another. Note that the first four criteria (Size, Natural Condition, Solitude and Recreation Opportunity) were the key factors in the BLM's "Wilderness Inventory". They will now be further analyzed, along with additional criteria which were *not* considered in the inventory phase.

Next, we will compare the wilderness values of each of the WSA's with other values which *may* be more suitable than wilderness; for example, mining, vehicular access, public utilities, development, etc. A multiple use planning approach will consider all uses. "Decision guidelines" will consider production and consumption as well as sensitive resources.

More specifically, decision guidelines will include appraisals of the following factors:

(1)	Demand	How significant is current and projected demand or use at local, regional, national levels?
(2)	Public Opinion	What are the feelings of the general public, and special interests relative to the choice(s) at hand?
(3)	Substitutes	Can demand be satisfied by alternative uses? locations?
(4)	Impacts	What kind of adverse impacts (physical, biological, economic, social, etc.) will be created? How effectively can they be mitigated? What beneficial impacts?
(5)	Rehabilitation	Is rehabilitation feasible?
(6)	Future Options	What effect would decision and use have upon future planning and decision making? What options would be closed?
(7)	Supply	What is the relative abundance or scarcity of the resource?
(8)	Condition and Trend	What is the condition and trend of the resource -- stable, improving, declining?
(9)	Uniqueness	Is the resource one of a kind?
(10)	Diversity	What other resource values are available within the same area?
(11)	Sensitivity	What types of impacts and/or intensity of impacts can the resource(s) withstand and remain in stable condition?
(12)	Law, Regulation and Policy	What are the constraints and guidance that will shape the decision?

In answering all these questions, the BLM will not only make choices between Wilderness and competing uses but will also shape a balanced multiple use plan.

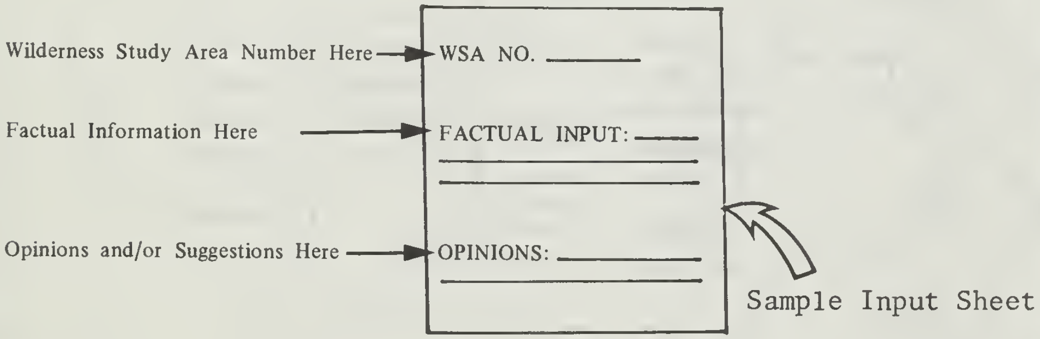
Throughout the planning process, public input will be sought and utilized. We invite your input and your opinions on Wilderness Study Areas during the study phase.

HOW TO GIVE PUBLIC INPUT ON WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS TO BLM

(1) Place the number of the Wilderness Study Area in the upper left-hand corner of a standard sheet of paper, or use one of the sample response sheets provided in the back of this booklet for your convenience.

(2) If the information you wish to give us is "Factual Input", (for example: the presence of mines, mineral potential, houses, fences, structures; or the existence of uses for recreation, energy, travel, etc.) please label it as such and provide as many facts as you have.

(3) If you do not have any factual input, or wish to give any, but you do have opinions or general "feelings" about the establishment of wilderness areas in the desert, please label this information as "Opinions", and give us the rationale for these comments. If you wish to suggest a boundary change to reflect more or less wilderness, indicate these on the Wilderness Study Area map, or tracing, and return it.



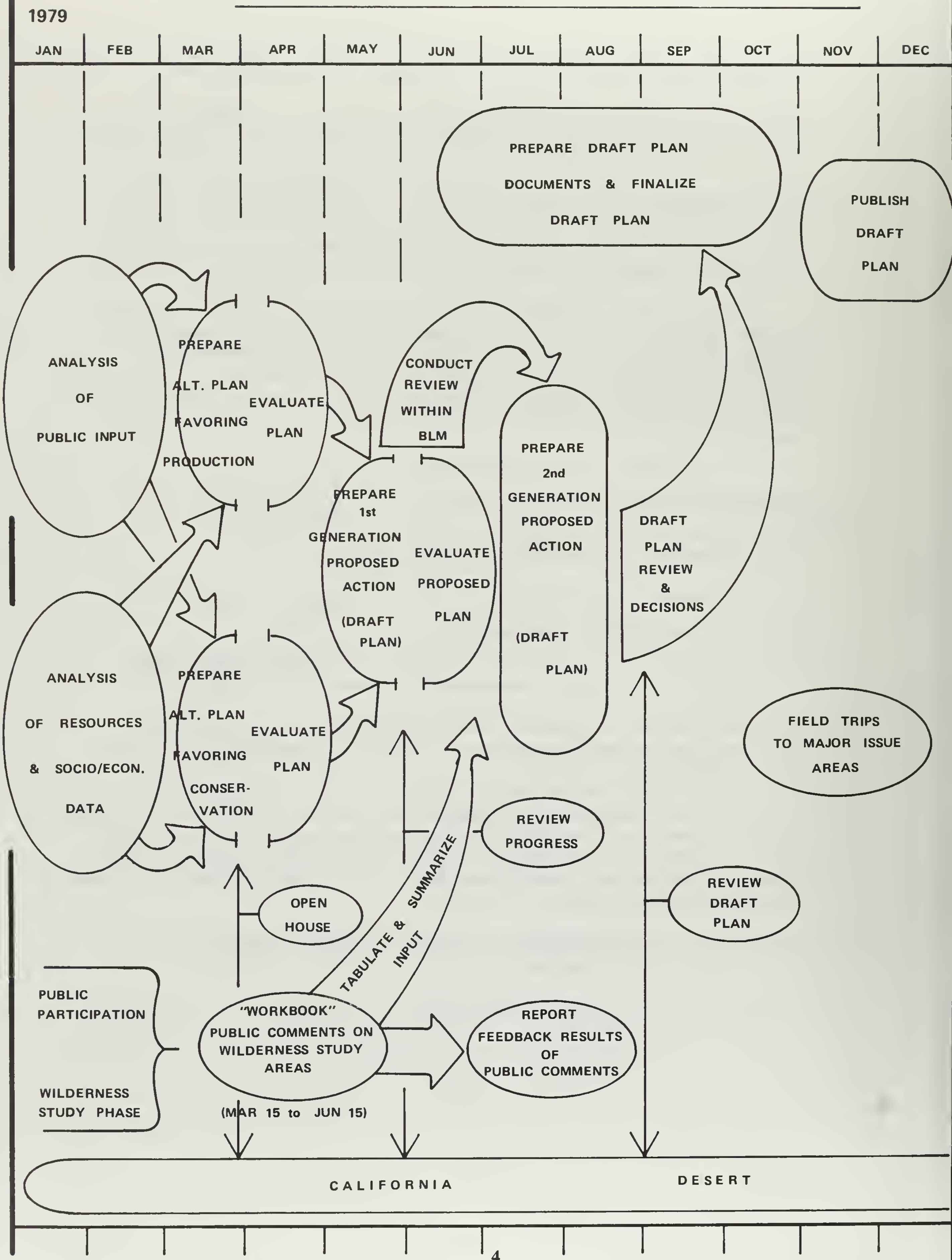
(4) Make sure you use a separate sheet of paper for each individual Wilderness Study Area about which you wish to give either "Factual Input", "Opinion", or both.

(5) If you are not familiar with specific Wilderness Study Areas and do not want to comment on them individually, you may want to give us some general comments on the subject. If so, please use a plain sheet of paper and, at the top, label this type of information "General Comments". No numbers are necessary.

(6) We must have this information, and these comments, from you by June 1, 1979. Please send them to:

BLM Desert Plan Staff
Wilderness
3610 Central Ave., Suite 402
Riverside, CA 92506

FEB. 1979 **PLAN and ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT**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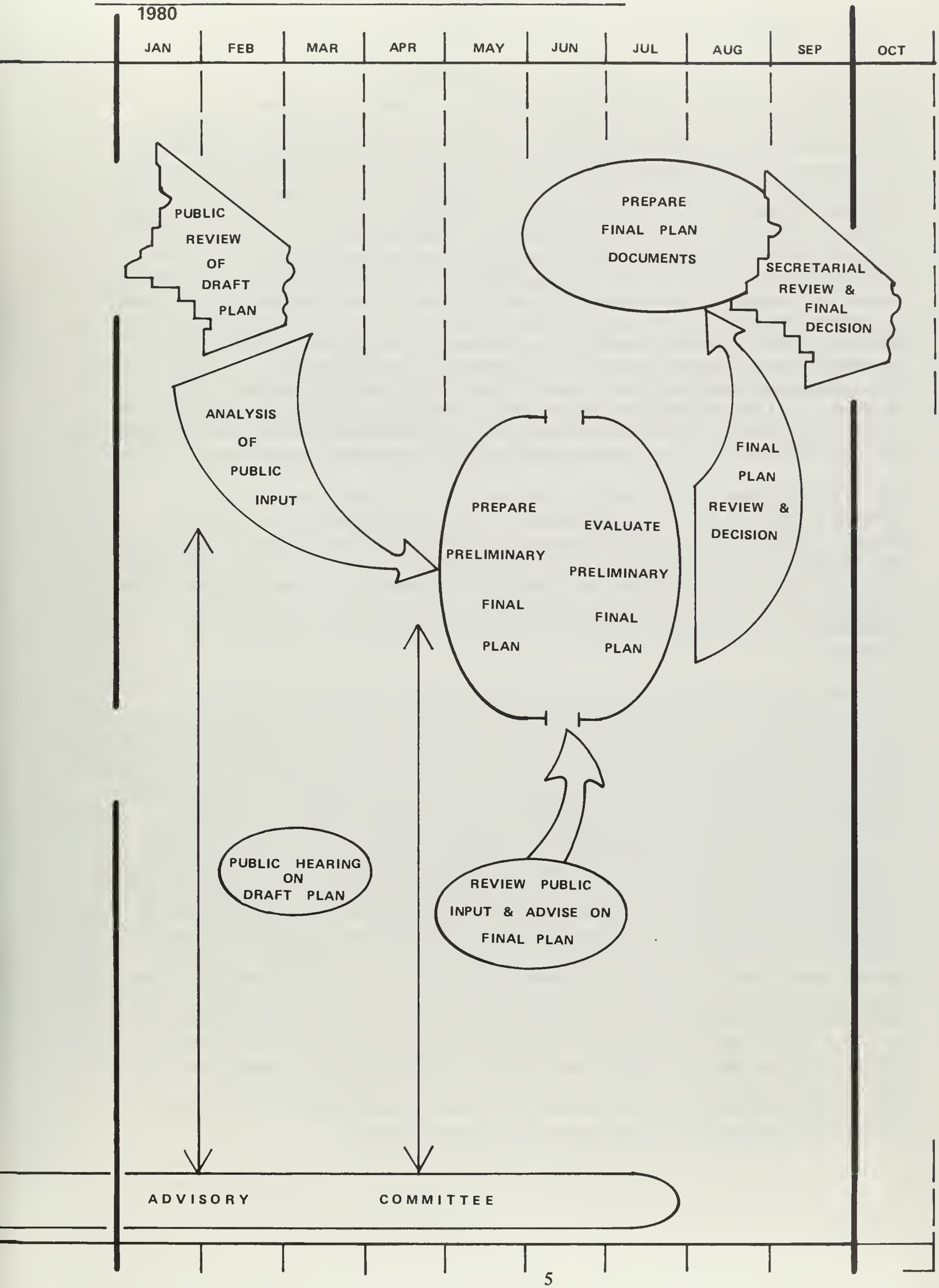
PREPARE 1st GENERATION PROPOSED ACTION (DRAFT PLAN)
EVALUATE PROPOSED PLAN
PREPARE 2nd GENERATION PROPOSED ACTION (DRAFT PLAN)
DRAFT PLAN REVIEW & DECISIONS
ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES & SOCIO/ECON. DATA
PREPARE ALT. PLAN FAVORING CONSER-VATION
EVALUATE PLAN
FIELD TRIPS TO MAJOR ISSUE AREAS
REVIEW PROGRESS
TABULATE & SUMMARIZE INPUT
OPEN HOUSE
REVIEW DRAFT PLAN
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
WILDERNESS STUDY PHASE
"WORKBOOK" PUBLIC COMMENTS ON WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS
(MAR 15 to JUN 15)
REPORT FEEDBACK RESULTS OF PUBLIC COMMENTS
CALIFORNIA DESERT

PREPARATION SCHEDULE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PUBLIC REVIEW OF DRAFT PLAN
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SECRETARIAL REVIEW & FINAL DECISION
PREPARE PRELIMINARY FINAL PLAN
EVALUATE PRELIMINARY FINAL PLAN
FINAL PLAN REVIEW & DECISION
PUBLIC HEARING ON DRAFT PLAN
REVIEW PUBLIC INPUT & ADVISE ON FINAL PLAN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF OCTOBER 1976

"Sec. 603. (a) Within fifteen years after the date of approval of this Act, the Secretary shall review those roadless areas of five thousand acres or more and roadless islands of the public lands, identified during the inventory required by section 201 (a) of this Act as having wilderness characteristics described in the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 890; 16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.) and shall from time to time report to the President his recommendation as to the suitability or nonsuitability of each such area or island for preservation as wilderness: Provided that, prior to any recommendations for the designation of an area as wilderness, the Secretary shall cause mineral surveys to be conducted by the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines to determine the mineral values, if any, that may be present in such areas: Provided further, the Secretary shall report to the President by July 1, 1980, his recommendations on those areas which the Secretary has prior to November 1, 1975, formally identified as natural or primitive areas. The review required by this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures specified in section 3 (d) of the Wilderness Act.

(b) The President shall advise the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of his recommendations with respect to designation as wilderness of each such area, together with a map thereof and a definition of its boundaries. Such advice by the President shall be given within two years of the receipt of each report from the Secretary. A recommendation of the President for designation as wilderness shall become effective only if so provided by an Act of Congress.

(c) During the period of review of such areas and until Congress has determined otherwise, *the Secretary shall continue to manage such lands* according to his authority under this Act and other *applicable law in a manner so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness, subject, however, to the continuation of existing mining and grazing uses and mineral leasing in the manner and degree in which the same was being conducted on the date of approval of this Act: Provided that, in managing the public lands, the Secretary shall by regulation or otherwise take any action required to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands and their resources or to afford environmental protection.* Unless previously withdrawn from appropriation under the mining laws, such lands shall continue to be subject to such appropriation during the period of review unless withdrawn by the Secretary under the procedures of section 204 of this Act for reasons other than preservation of their wilderness character. Once an area has been designated for preservation as wilderness, the provisions of the Wilderness Act which apply to national forest wilderness areas shall apply with respect to the administration and use of such designated areas, including mineral surveys required by section 4(d) (2) of the Wilderness Act, and mineral development, access exchange of lands, and ingress and egress for mining claimants and occupants" (emphasis added).

WILDERNESS ACT OF 1964

Section 2(c) "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use of an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical values."

PUBLIC RESPONSE SHEET FOR WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

No. Wilderness Study Area (WSA): ____________________

COMMENTS: (Use additional sheets of paper if necessary)

FACTUAL INPUT: ____________________

OPINIONS: ____________________

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California Desert Wilderness Inventory
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March 31, 1979

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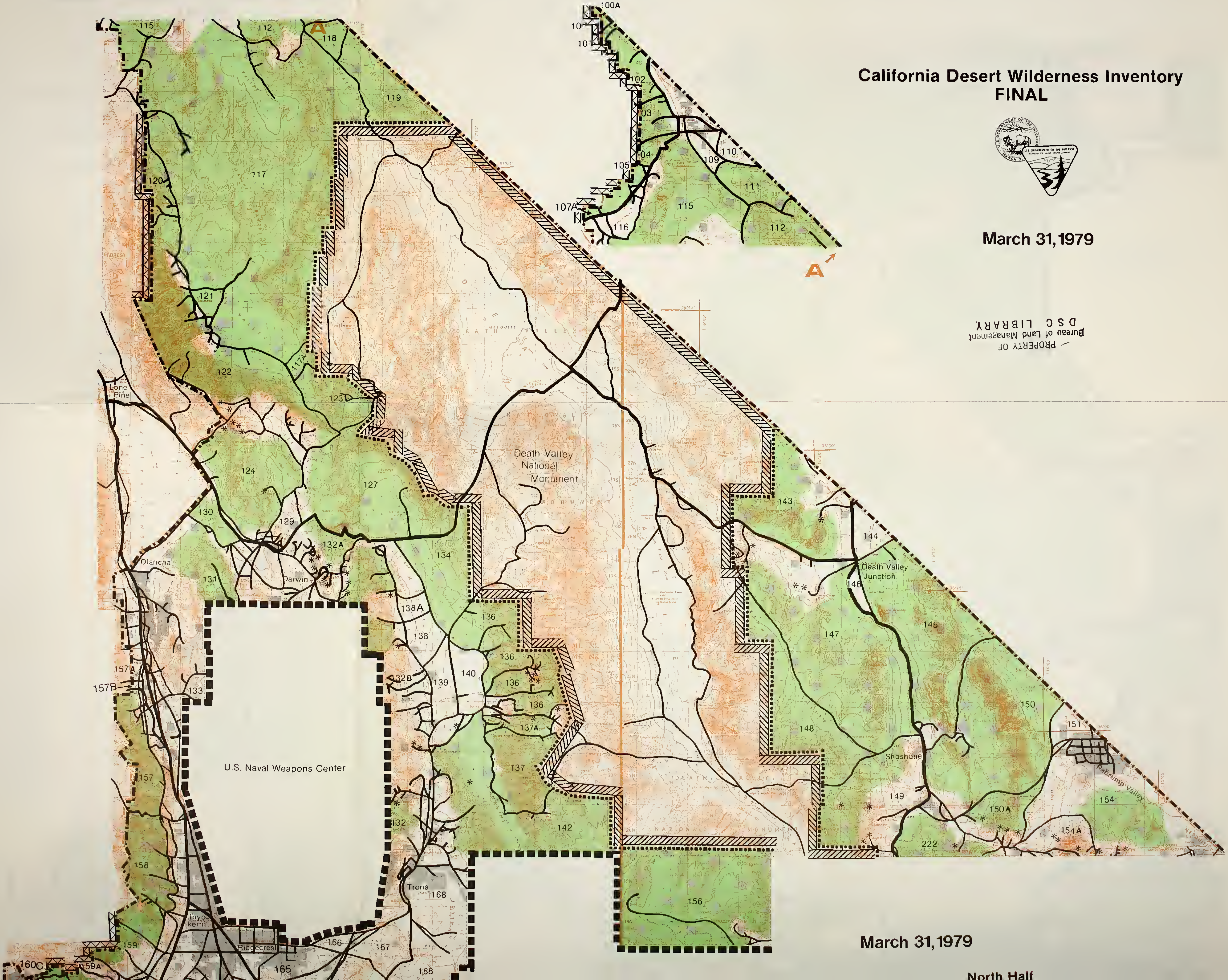
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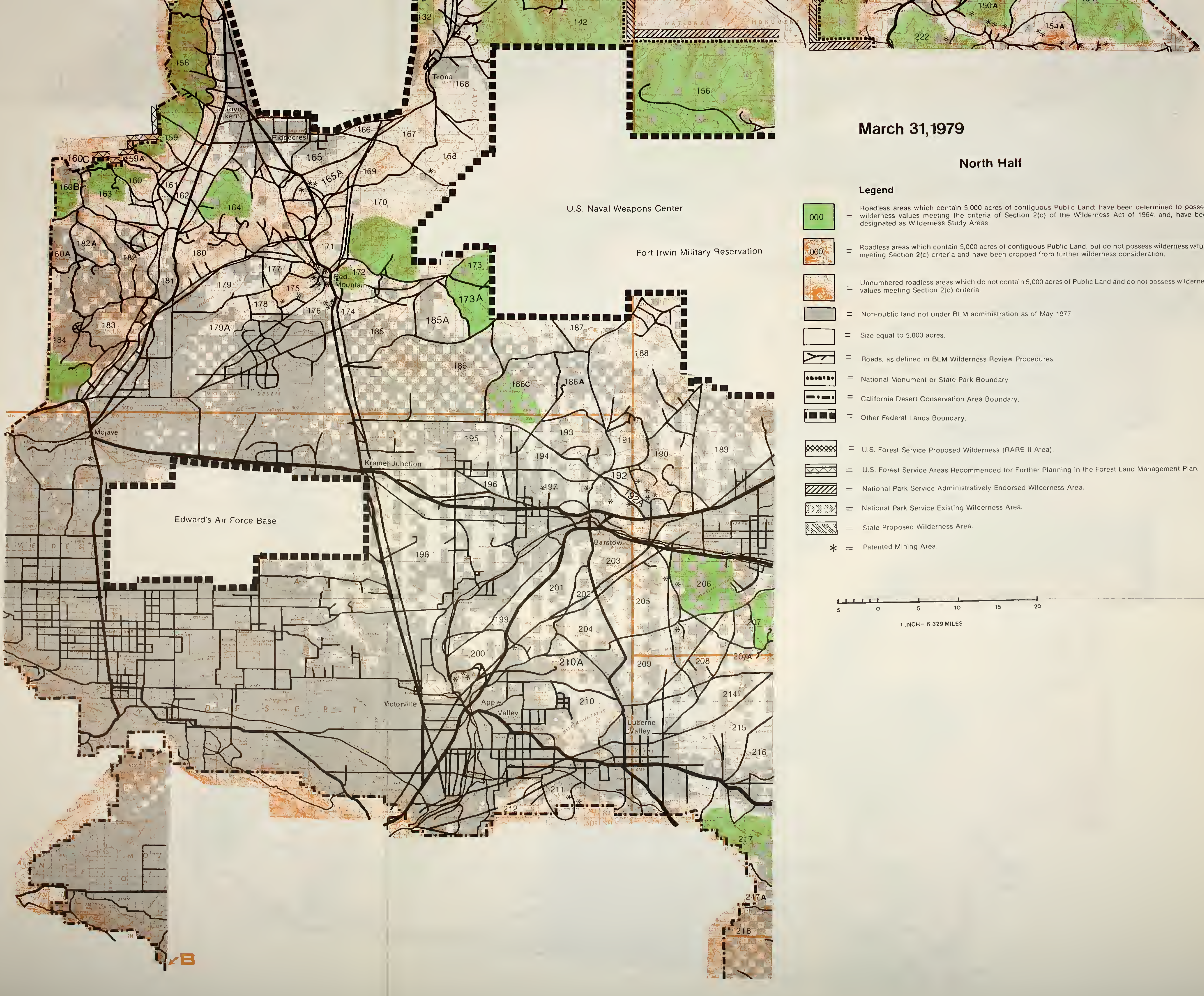
Pahrump Valley

March 31, 1979

North Half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Legend

🟩 000 = Roadless areas which contain 5,000 acres of contiguous Public Land; have been determined to possess wilderness values meeting the criteria of Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964; and, have been designated as Wilderness Study Areas.

▨ 000 = Roadless areas which contain 5,000 acres of contiguous Public Land, but do not possess wilderness values meeting Section 2(c) criteria and have been dropped from further wilderness consideration.

▨ = Unnumbered roadless areas which do not contain 5,000 acres of Public Land and do not possess wilderness values meeting Section 2(c) criteria.

▩ = Non-public land not under BLM administration as of May 1977.

☐ = Size equal to 5,000 acres.

☐ = Roads, as defined in BLM Wilderness Review Procedures.

☐ = National Monument or State Park Boundary.

☐ = California Desert Conservation Area Boundary.

☐ = Other Federal Lands Boundary.

▦ = U.S. Forest Service Proposed Wilderness (RARE II Area).

▦ = U.S. Forest Service Areas Recommended for Further Planning in the Forest Land Management Plan.

▨ = National Park Service Administratively Endorsed Wilderness Area.

▨ = National Park Service Existing Wilderness Area.

▨ = State Proposed Wilderness Area.

* = Patented Mining Area.

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1 INCH = 6.329 MILES

California Desert Wilderness Inventory
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South Half

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🟩 000 = Roadless areas which contain 5,000 acres of contiguous Public Land; have been determined to possess wilderness values meeting the criteria of Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964; and, have been designated as Wilderness Study Areas.

000 = Roadless areas which contain 5,000 acres of contiguous Public Land, but do not possess wilderness values meeting Section 2(c) criteria and have been dropped from further wilderness consideration.

☐ = Unnumbered roadless areas which do not contain 5,000 acres of Public Land and do not possess wilderness values meeting Section 2(c) criteria.

▨ = Non-public land not under BLM administration as of May 1977.

☐ = Size equal to 5,000 acres.

= Roads, as defined in BLM Wilderness Review Procedures.

= National Monument or State Park Boundary

= California Desert Conservation Area Boundary.

= Other Federal Lands Boundary.

▩ = U.S. Forest Service Proposed Wilderness (RARE II Area).

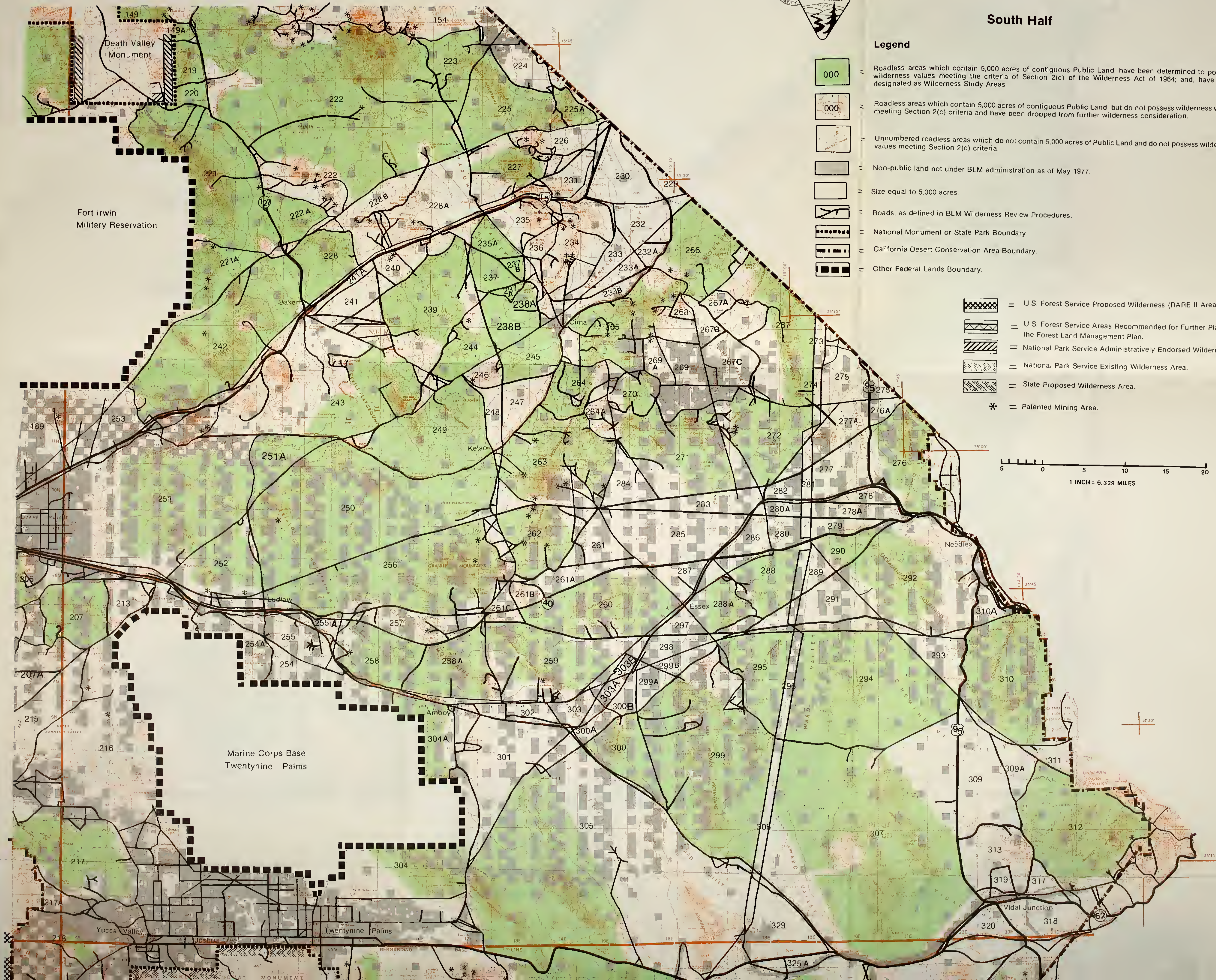
= U.S. Forest Service Areas Recommended for Further Planning in the Forest Land Management Plan.

▨ = National Park Service Administratively Endorsed Wilderness Area.

= National Park Service Existing Wilderness Area.

= State Proposed Wilderness Area.

* = Patented Mining Area.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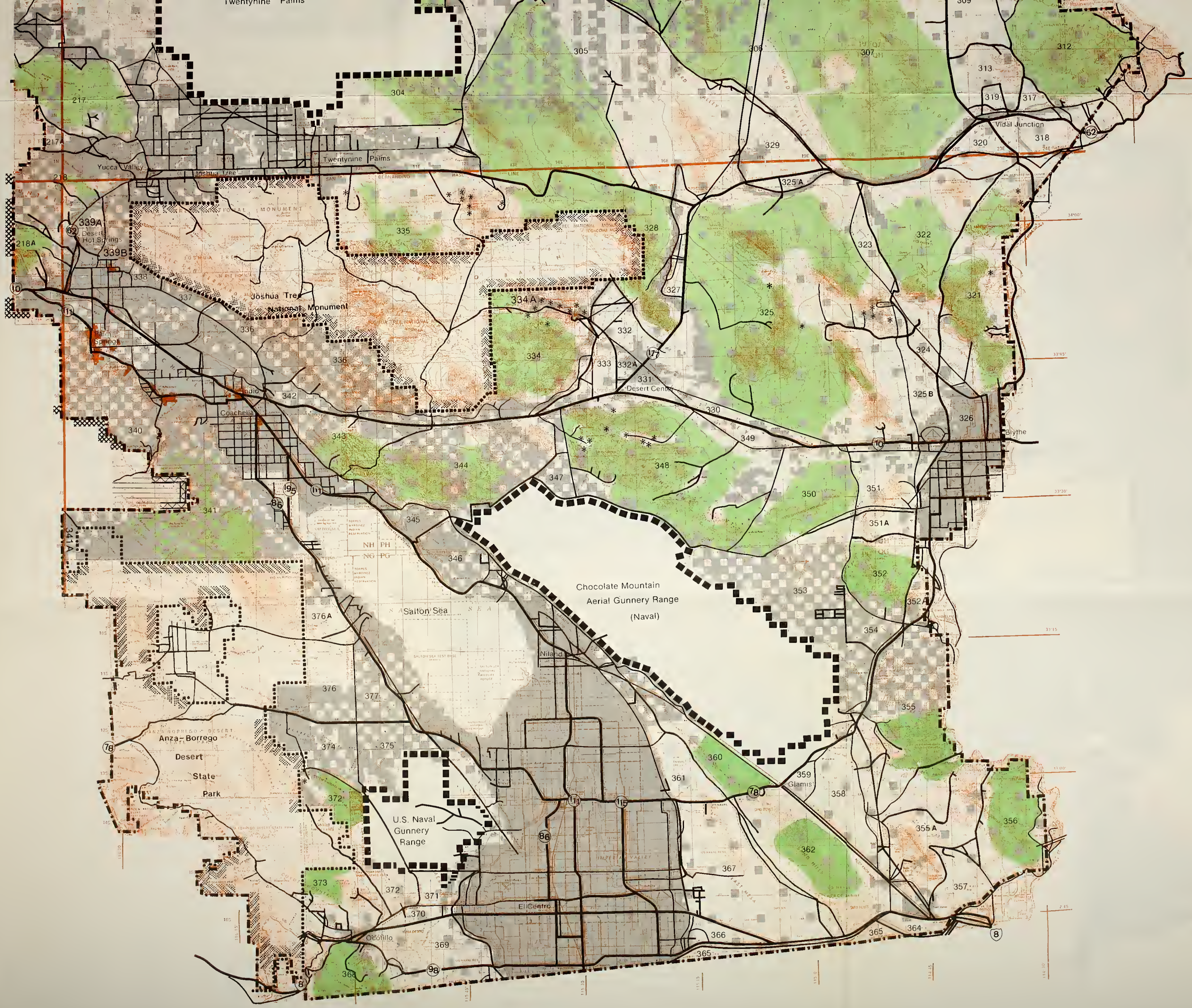
Twentynine Palms
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Yucca Valley
Twentynine Palms
Joshua Tree
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Desert Hot Springs
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Joshua Tree National Monument
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Palm Springs
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Desert Center
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Indio
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Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range (Naval)
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Glamis
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U.S. Naval Gunnery Range
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El Centro
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